

The Lonely Angel and His Guardian Monster by KawaiiKilala77

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Summary: Bill is an abused, neglected, and bullied child. It's not something that has been hidden from the public but when you're in the town called Derry, people turn a blind eye to horrible situations. And if you were to ask Bill, he'll tell you that he has gotten used to it (after all, it's what he deserves). But apparently, his new friend doesn't think so. Bill/Richie. Monster!Richie

1. Have You Seen my Childhood?

The Lonely Angel and his Guardian Monster

Chapter 1: Have You Seen my Childhood?

When Bill was four, he wondered why his parents never acted sweet and loving like he has seen other parents do. He didn't receive a lot of hugs him or kisses from his mother. His father didn't talk or pay attention to him much and when he did, his gaze was far from warm or affectionate. The most he remembers is, "Stop bothering your daddy Bill." Or "Stop your sniveling, you're not a girl!"

He learned not to cry a lot or talk too loudly because it bother his dad, especially when they got into a car accident and due to the crash, it ended up with him stuttering a lot of his words.

He learned not to be messy, not to be rude, and not to touch what's not yours; he learned that the hard way. A year ago, out of curiosity, he picked up his dad's beeper to look at it. His dad smacked his hand so hard that his knuckles and the middle of his hand turned bluish black and it left him in tears and even unable to curl his fingers into a fist. He got sent to the corner for crying dramatically.

The only thing that always made him happy was his Grandma Willow who always seemed happy to see him. She would always call him her little "Will" and tell him that he's going to be as big as a willow tree with the way he kept on growing.

She never complain when he asked for hugs and kisses and whenever she had a good day, as in that her back didn't bother her and her hands wouldn't shake, she would pick him up and place him on her hip, tickling his chin and neck. Her blue eyes, which he has been told a lot of times that his eyes are the same as hers; big, warm, and bright, would twinkle and stare at him like he has hung the moon.

Grandma Willow was his favorite person in the world.

And he could tell that the feeling was mutual.

Bill was six when he first saw his dad drunk, stumbling inside and crashing on top of the sofa. Bill at that time was coloring in his coloring book, having another hour before he would go to sleep.

Bill was curious and slightly afraid as to why his father came home the way he did. Cautiously, he stood up from the floor and silently walked towards his dad's prone body.

"D-dad, are y-y-you okay?" his dad didn't like being called daddy; it made him sound like a girl he's been told.

All he received was a grunt and then his father moved. Sluggishly, he tried to sit up, only to crash back to the couch. Bill, who likes to help, tried to help him sit up so that he would stop hitting his head against the arm's rest. But the moment he put his hands on his father's arm, he was roughly pushed away.

"Don't touch me." He slurs but Bill understood enough. Hurt, he backs away and goes back to the table and tries to go back to coloring. By the corner of his eyes, he sees that his father finally sat up and went to stand up. Once on his feet, he dragged himself away from the living room and up the stairs.

"Sharon!" he bellowed. "Come be useful and help me up the stairs!"

While he couldn't see, he can imagine his mother's tired look as she breathed, "Zack, keep your voice down."

"I'm tired of this shit Sharon!" he continued as though his mother never responded, "I told you, I fucking told you we weren't ready for this commitment! Why didn't you listen to me?"

"Zack..."

"I told you to get an abortion but you refused to!"

Bill wondered what an abortion was.

"And now we have to deal with this...mistake!"

His mother didn't respond to that statement and his father already had made it up the stairs.

Bill knew a lot but there are some things that he didn't understand. But instinctively, he knew that those statements were about him and something inside him told him to cry. And so he did.

Confused and hurt for reasons he did not understand he wiped away his tears and walk towards the phone, his instincts telling him to call his grandma. Besides, she'll know what to say and do.

As he dialed the number he already has memorized, he waited. On the third ring he heard his grandma's gentle yet strong voice on the line. But oddly enough, there was an odd pitch in her tone and that worried him.

"G-grandma?"

"Yes Will baby?"

"Are y-y-you okay?"

"Grandma is fine sweetie. It's just I feel tired and my chest hurts."

"Then s-s-s-shouldn't you b-be in b-b-bed?"

"I am sweetie." He could hear the affection in her tone even as tired as she sounded.

"I c-can let you s-s-sleep if y-you want?"

"I know you William and I know you dislike calling me late and only do that when something really bothers you. Tell your Grandma what's the matter."

Bill hesitated, hating to be bothering his grandma when she wasn't feeling all that well but curiosity overpowered his courteous nature.

"G-grandma, wuh-what's an a-abortion?"

Bill could hear his grandma breathed in sharply and that worried him a little.

"Willi—"

He carried on before he lost his nerve, "A-a-a-and what's a m-m-mistake?"

"William," the tone was sharp yet he could hear the worry in her voice, "Where did you hear that?"

Nervously, he nibbled on his bottom lip, "F-from my d-d-dad."

His grandmother was silent. Bill played with the telephone cord anxiously, his blue eyes roaming around the room.

"Paid no mind to your father William, you shouldn't worry about the things that your father says. And always remember that you are loved. That *I love you*." And then he could hear the smile in her voice, "How about I tell you the tale of "The Story of the Boy Who Went Forth to Learn What Fear Was"?"

Bill, excited, let out a pleased hum and went to lie down on the couch, listening intently to his grandma's tale.

Around the middle of the story, he fell asleep to his grandma's voice.

She passed away last night in her sleep, the words of the fairy tale that she was telling the last thing he heard from her.

He wept.

(Years later, he figured out that the mistake was him.)

A month later, after his grandma passed away, he noticed that his parents seem to be...excited? Bill was confused as to why they seem so happy.

"Mom, wuh-why are y-you happy?"

His mother turned to him with giddy eyes, "I received some good news Bill."

"G-good news?"

She nodded happily, "You're going to be a brother Bill!"

Surprised, he could only repeat, "Buh-brother?"

"She's going to have a baby you stupid child." His father grunt but his words were less harsh than usual.

He knew that but he was honestly shocked.

He was going to be a big brother...

The day that his brother was born, Bill was pleasantly surprised to find himself happy to meet his baby brother. His baby brother was so tiny, pink, and helpless and yet shockingly strong as he held on to his thin finger. He noticed that the cold quality in his mom's voice was warmer and sounded almost loving as she introduced his brother, Georgie, to him. Even his dad seemed proud and affectionate.

But he wasn't stupid. He knew that they were only like this because of his baby brother.

But he can't complain. Maybe they'll be nicer to him now. Maybe...

Georgie said his first word. But his first word wasn't mama, dada, or even milk. His first word was "Bill"; his name. He almost cried in happiness at that even if his parents were grumbling and annoyed as he hugged his baby brother closed to him.

His little brother loves him and although he wishes that his parents love him as much as they love Georgie, he can take what he receives.

Georgie is getting older now, he's about five, but Georgie didn't seem to be inclined to leave Bill's side. And while most find it odd since most siblings either fight or ignore each other, Bill loves Georgie with all his heart and he felt so loved when his brother would always look for him; in the morning when he wakes up, the moment they return home and Georgie quickly runs up to Bill's room to hang out with him, and to give him a hug and a soft good night before leaving to his room.

His parents complain that Georgie is too dependent on his brother but Bill doesn't mind. He loves talking to Georgie, who never gets frustrated with him when he stutters a lot, especially when he has a bad day and he doesn't mind teaching him stuff that his teachers, the kind ones at least, taught him or he taught himself since his parents never had time for him, unless it was Georgie.

But he understands. If Georgie asks, he would give him the moon if he could...

His world got turned upside down.

Bill lies on his bed, sweating up a storm and tossing and turning, the fever driving him insane.

A soft and barely audible knock resound in his room.

"Cuh-come in." he whispers, his voice low and his throat aching. When the door opens, a small head peaks in.

"Hi Billy." Georgie says softly, walking quietly inside.

Bill couldn't help but smile, "Hi G-Georgie. Don't g-g-get too close. You'll g-get s-s-sick."

"It's okay Billy, you were there for me when I was feeling bad. I don't mind being next to you." Georgie reassures with a wide grin.

"S-still, I don't wuh-want to m-make you s-s-sick again."

"Don't worry, I'll be fine! Is there anything I can do for you?"

Bill thinks for a moment, "Is there more chicken soup?"

Georgie's face drops and he shakes his head, "Mom made me the last can. I'm sorry Billy."

"It's a-alright Georgie. W-where's mom and d-dad?"

"Dad is still working and mom went to our neighbor's house."

Bill closes his eyes at the slight pain he felt when he heard that. Of course...

"But I can go to the corner store and buy a can for you!"

"It's alright Georgie; I c-c-can wait till m-mom or d-d-dad come back h-home."

"I can handle it Billy! Mom and dad are already letting me go to the store by myself and I can cook the soup by putting it in the microwave!" Georgie says excitedly, his eyes big and eager to help.

"I-I-I don't know."

"Please~" Georgie pouts, his eyes widening. Bill shakes his head; it annoys him how he can still fall for Georgie's puppy dog eyes.

"Fuh-fine but t-t-tell mom or dad fuh-first before y-you do that."

"Okay Billy!" was the bright reply and before he could even blink, he little brother runs out of the room. Bill stares at the empty spot next to his bed, a feeling of dread curling around his heart. Leaning back into his pillow, he closes his eyes, trying to push back the sensation of fear and uncertainty.

He was almost asleep when Georgie comes back into the room.

"Billy, mom said it was okay. I'll see you soon."

Forcing his eyes open and sitting up slightly, he calls out, "Georgie wait!"

Georgie appears at the open door, curious and confused as he plays with the sleeve of his yellow jacket.

"Yes Billy?"

"C-can't you g-give your bru-brother a hug?" he inquires with a small smile.

Without being told twice, Georgie bounds back into the room and happily wraps his arms around his older brother's neck. Bill hugs him

back, his body aching and bone tired but pressing his little brother's warm body to his. After a moment or two, he pulls back from the hug.

Georgie grins, "I love you Billy."

"Y-yeah, back at you." Bill responds before ruffling the boy's hair. Swatting playfully at the hand, Georgie waves goodbye.

"Be c-careful." He adds as an afterthought. Georgie blinks in surprise before nodding with a smile and walking out of the room.

Bill stares at the open door, his head pounding and the hairs on the back of his neck standing up.

He'll go asleep when Georgie comes back. It'll be quick after all; the store is at the corner of the street.

He'll wait...

Georgie never came home...

Georgie was found a few weeks later, discarded a few towns away, looking like an abandon doll with hand shaped bruises on his neck, eyes forever close in a seemingly peaceful slumber.

Strangled; his baby brother, his Georgie was strangled and then thrown away like trash. Like *nothing*.

He's gone. He's not here; he's *dead!* And it was his entire fault!

He should have said no. He should have persisted that he was fine, even if he did feel lightheaded and his stomach kept on cramping, he was completely fine and willing to wait for their parents. He should have just told him to hang out with him until their parents come. He should have—

But he didn't and Georgie paid for his mistake.

It's all his fault, his entire fault. He got his brother killed and he's the

one who broke their family apart. He broke their parents' charade of being affectionate towards him. He broke his parents beyond belief.

It's all his fault and his father doesn't get tired of reminding him, just like his mother never does anything to defend him when the accusing and cruel words leave him in tears. But that's alright...

He deserves it for being an *awful brother*.

It's been a year now since Georgie's disappearance and death. He can still remember that pain and sorrow like it happened yesterday. Today is the "anniversary", which unfortunately put his dad in horrid mood, worse than usual, and his mother hasn't left the bed when he woke up.

He turned fourteen yesterday and in three months, Georgie would have been eight if he were still alive. He celebrated his birthday alone and hungry since neither of his parents haven't gone out for grocery shopping.

Today was a difficult day and it wasn't just because today is the anniversary.

"Hey B-B-Billy Boy, what's with the long face?" an older boy by the name of Henry, although everyone calls him Bowers, jeered from the steps of the school.

Bill refuses to acknowledge him and continue walking down the steps, for once eager to go home and disappear into his room.

"Hey, I'm talking to you freak!"

Bill looks around him, trying to decide the best course of action as he started to walk a little faster. He started tensing up when he heard more than one person following him.

Bill doesn't like to think himself of a coward but he wasn't stupid enough to believe that he could take on Bowers and his gang of merry, vicious idiots. So there was only one thing to do.

He runs.

He hears the shout of surprise and delight as they took chase. Not looking back he looks around, trying to see if he could find a good hiding spot. Without thinking about it, he makes a sharp turn towards the left, jumping over a box that got in his way and then took another turn to his right. He didn't hear footsteps behind him but he didn't risk it and continued running.

As he wonders whether or not he can reach his house since he finds no good place to hide, something caught his eye. When he looks, he sees an antique shop, looking new and clean despite its rather dull appearances.

Looking behind him for a quick minute and seeing that there was no one behind him, Bill enters the antique shop, opening and closing the door gently behind him as to make no noise.

Taking the time to lean against a wall and try to catch his breath, he looks around. The inside of the store was surprisingly neat and nothing was thrown about or cluttered like he had seen in other antique stores. There was no dust and while there was an odd smell, he can guarantee that the scent came out from really old artifacts and thought nothing of it. The lights were a bit dimmed, probably to give it a cozy feeling but the atmosphere of the store was stiff, almost suffocating.

Finally able to breathe normally, Bill cautiously walks around the store, making sure not to let his book bag bump into anything. He wonders if they sell spare parts for his bike, especially since his back was kind of an old model.

"Is there something you're looking for?"

Bill swallowed the gasp and turns quickly to where he heard the voice.

Standing behind the counter was a tall pale woman, a door behind her open and showing stacks and cases against the wall. Huh, that must have been the reason he didn't see her before.

The woman is lovely with brown hair that fell in waves and dark brown eyes that stare Bill down, her red lips in a slight frown. But

despite her good looks, there was something about her that put Bill on edge.

"I w-was wondering i-if you have s-s-spare bicycle p-parts?"

The woman was so oddly still that Bill question himself whether or not she was even breathing before shaking her head.

"I don't sell bicycle parts inside my store."

"O-oh okay, t-thank you anyways." Bill utters with timid shrug and was about to leave and go home before the Bowers Gang made an appearance when he stops, turning his head to look at the clear display case.

Bill couldn't help but stare at the thick and detailed ring inside the black ring box.

The ring is silver with a round, pure black jewel nestled in the middle of the ring, and the ring itself had long "strands" intertwining around the jewel, almost looking like fingers. Like—

Like legs; spider legs. His mind points out helpfully as he continues to stare at it. When Bill finally forces himself to look up, he sees the lady staring at him with those unfathomable brown eyes, hardly blinking before lowering her eyes and pulling out the box with the ring in it from the display case and placing it in front of him.

"Put it on."

Bill stares, "What?"

"Put it on." The woman repeats again, her voice forceful and her eyes narrowing.

Nervously, he grabs the ring gingerly and stares at it. Feeling its weight, he hesitated before slipping it on his ring finger. Bill was surprised and a bit unnerved when the ring fit perfectly in his finger. It should had been impossible with how big it looked when he first laid eyes on it but here it was, a perfect and surprisingly comfortable weight in his finger.

Bill was about to take it off when he heard the simple yet loud, "Leave it, it's yours."

"What? B-b-but I can't! I-I-I don't h-have enough muh-money for this r-r-ring."

"It's a priceless ring, no need to pay for it. You can have it; no one has been able to wear it. It's a...special ring. Not everyone can wear it."

"B-But—"

"Besides, you're doing me a favor." She continues, not letting him get a word in, "No one wants that ring."

"Nuh-not even you?"

She tilts her head and eyes him oddly, her eyes wide and her face solemn, "I can't wear it."

Bill stares at her warily.

"It's getting late now, you should leave. Your parents must be worried about you."

Bill wanted to scoff at that but he conceded and turns away from her, already knowing that he was being dismissed.

As he walks out of the store, cautiously looking around, he remembers the ring still in his finger, and was about to head back in and return the ring when he caught sight of the lady.

She was still in the same place, never moved an inch but she continues to stare at him, her head tilted a bit and her eyes still wide and frozen in the same solemn expression, looking like a mannequin than an actual human being.

Disturbed, he walks off towards the direction of his house, ignoring the sensation of being stared at as he walks further away.

He needs to make a mental note to not go back to that place ever again.

When Bill got home, surprisingly safe and sound, he wasn't shocked to see that the first floor was devoid of life. What was astounding though was the fact that his dad wasn't around; he would have thought that he would take the day off, either to get drunk or to take his anger on him. It's kind of sad; his dad didn't drink much but ever since Georgie died—well alcohol became his best friend.

Taking it as a small blessing, Bill walks over to the kitchen to see if he could find something to eat since neither of his parents still haven't done grocery shopping. When he opened the fridge, he was happy to find an apple nearly hidden from sight. Giving it a quick wash, Bill heads up the stairs and into his room, eating his apple as he sits on the bed. It didn't take long to finish the apple, in which he throws the core away and left to room to wash his hands, ignoring that his stomach continues to growl.

Before long, he threw himself into the bed and stare listlessly at his bedroom ceiling. In this room, in this cold house, Bill felt more alone than the time his beloved grandma died.

Blinking away the tears, Bill closes his eyes as he imagines his Grandma Willow and his brother Georgie meeting in heaven. Feeling a smile forming on his face, he continues to imagine the scenario. Before long he falls asleep.

The next time Bill wakes up, the room was pitched black and the moon hung high into the sky, looking bright and full. Rubbing his eyes, Bill stretches and tries to blindly turn on the lamp on his bedside table as he sits on his bed; when he felt the string, he gently tugs it and the room brightens up with the soft, yellow glow of the lamp.

After adjusting to the light, Bill looks forward and almost jumps out of his skin.

At the end of the bed, curled up into a ball was a boy; a boy around his age with his knees drawn up to his chest and he had his arms wrapped around them, his cheek resting against his knees. Big, innocuous brown eyes stare at him. He was rather pale with faint freckles at the bridge of his nose and cheekbones. He has the softest,

black curls he has ever seen.

While the boy look soft and innocent, Bill couldn't help but feel wary.

"W-who are y-y-you?!"

The noirette didn't answer, only raising his head and looking around the room with bored eyes.

"This is your room? Talk about unimpressive."

Bill glares and then snaps out, "I a-asked y-you a q-q-question!"

The boy smirks, "Relax big guy, I come in peace."

Bill continues to glare at him.

"If anything, I should be thanking you."

Bill looks taken aback, "T-thanking me?"

The boy continues as though he wasn't interrupted, "And offering my services to you."

"S-s-services?"

"Yup," he drawls the word, "You freed me pretty boy."

"W-what are you tuh-tuh-talking about?"

The boy then smiles at him but there was something weird about the smile; something sharp, something *dangerous* and his eyes look too dark, almost black when Bill could have sworn that his eyes were a natural, earth brown color.

"Don't you worry your pretty little head; I'll explain it to you when you wake up." Even though the boy was in front of him, his voice appears to come from everywhere, echoing deafeningly in his room and the words were more growled out than actually spoken.

Swallowing his apprehension, Bill looks at the boy in confusion, "Wake up? W-what are you tal—"

And then Bill wakes up.

Blinking, Bill sits up and looks around his room suspiciously. Seeing nothing out of the ordinary, he relaxes against his bed. Looking to the side, he sees that the sun was barely up and when he looks towards his clock, the clock read 5:55 AM in bold red.

Since he was already awake, Bill stretches and gets out of his bed. He might as well get ready for school.

Quickly doing the bed, he heads towards his closet to take out the clothes for today and his drawers to pull out his socks and underwear. Quietly tip toeing into the bathroom; he turns on the shower head and let the water run as adjust the temperature. Once the water is set to his liking, he begins to disrobe. When he was done, he eyes the ring in his finger.

Although he didn't get the ring out of want or desire, he might as well take care of it; no use in letting it get ruin since in that odd, creepy way, it was a beautiful ring.

Nodding to himself, he tries to take off the ring. Keyword: tried.

Confused, he tries to take it off. Seeing it didn't move, he tries to twist it. Nothing, it didn't move at all. Ignoring the anxiety that is coiling around his stomach, he opens the faucet, presses the pump of the soap dispenser, he tries to see if the soap was enough to make the ring slippery enough to take it.

Only he got the same results as before, the ring didn't budge at all and the skin around his finger was starting to turn raw.

Now he let the panic sink in.

The ring wouldn't come off!

2. Somebody's Watching Me

The Lonely Angel and the Guardian Monster

Warning: Physical, Verbal, and Emotional Child Abuse, Child Neglect, Emotional Manipulation, Self-Blame, Humiliation, Bullying, and Disturbing Images.

Disclaimer: I don't own Bill, Richie, the Losers Club, or It.

Chapter 2: Somebody's Watching Me

Bill pulls on his bangs in frustration as he continues to stare at the ring.

He tried again in the shower, trying to see if the mix of soap, shampoo, and conditioner would make it easier to slip off the ring but surprise; it didn't work. And while the skin around the outside of the ring was red, he was astounded by the fact that it didn't hurt, not even when he poked the area. It was as if the *ring* made sure that area around the ring didn't get hurt, which was kind of creepy if he thinks about it.

Bill, curious, gently touches the black jewel of the ring, frowning a bit when he realizes that the jewel felt...warm instead of cool like when he first touched it before he was pressured to put it on.

Maybe it was the warm shower?

Pushing away his uneasiness, Bill picks up his book bag, making sure he had everything in his bag. As he checks his papers and notes he belatedly realizes that he forgot to do his homework.

Well shit.

Letting out a semi loud curse, he slaps his forehead as he glares at his blank homework sheet that he was assigned to do yesterday. Giving a quick check at his clock, he's a bit relieved when he notices that he has enough time to at least half-heartedly answers the questions in his homework. Quickly taking a seat in his bed, he started on his

assignment.

Bill eyes the finished homework with critical eyes for a moment before nodding to himself in satisfaction. It's not his best but at least it wasn't blank and the teacher won't get on his case. Putting it inside the bag, Bill put on his worn and somewhat dirty converse—he needs to remind himself to wash them later—and did one last check up before walking out of his room.

He takes a peak at his parents' room and was worried when he sees his mother's still body, staring blankly at the wall across from her, apparently not moving from the bed since yesterday. While he wanted to remind his mother to stand up and at least stretch but he knew from experience that his mother would look *through* him, that at times he wonders if he's the ghost.

Sighing quietly, he bypasses the room and continues his way downstairs. He takes a few steps to head towards the kitchen when he stops himself.

Standing in front of the refrigerator was his dad, hunched over and mumbling and cursing.

Bill, nervously, swallows silently and backs away, his eyes never leaving his father's back. He starts to turn around, hoping to escape unnoticed when he bumped against the small table next to stairs, making a high pitched screech that sounded obscenely loud inside the quiet house. Cursing under his breath, Bill hesitantly looks to the side and he shivers slightly when he saw his dad staring at him with bloodshot, almost dead eyes.

"Bill, come here."

Bill didn't move.

"Don't make me repeat it boy; you know I hate repeating myself."

Biting his bottom lip, Bill walks over to him, his shoulders hunched up and his eyes lowered. When he enters the kitchen, the horrendous smell of vomit reaches his nose, making his nose crinkle but wisely

stating nothing.

"Y-y-y-yes d-dad?"

"Bill, what are the rules of this house that I have taught you?"

"W-what?"

"Answer me boy, what are the important rules that I have taught you!"

Curling his hands into fists, he raises his head and answers, "Nuh-not to cruh-cry a lot, not to tuh-talk loudly, not to be m-m-messy, not t-t-to be rude, and nuh-not to tuh-touch t-things that are not y-yours."

His dad nods, eyes unusually focused as he stares down at him, "Good good. But it looks like I wasn't too clear with you."

Bill frowns, "D-dad?"

"Boy, did you eat my mushroom soup?"

Bill stares at his dad in confusion, "H-huh?"

Suddenly his dad grabs his right arm tightly, making him let out a pained and startled yip as he was pulled forward, nose to nose with his father, the mixed smell of vomit and rancid alcohol in his breath, wafting into his face. He forces back his urge to throw up.

"Don't play stupid with me boy! Did you eat my soup?!"

"Nuh-nuh-no!"

"Liar," he hisses, his eyes taking in a manic glint, "Didn't I teach you not to lie?!"

Oh God, it was one of *those* days.

"D-dad, I don't e-e-even luh-like mushrooms. Why would I-I-I eat your s-s-soup?" come to think of it, he didn't even saw a bowl of soup. Either his father ate it before he even realize it was there or it was all in his head and he just wanted a reason to start a fight due to how

much he been drinking last night. Both of these things sound probable.

His response seemed to have angered him for the already tight hold on his arm *tightened* to a point that Bill was worried that his dad was trying to crush the bone of his upper arm.

Bill's breath hitched when his dad grabbed his left hand with his free hand and then he was easily pulled towards the kitchen table. Bill bit back a pained grunt when his left hand was slammed on top of the table, his wrist and the heel of his hand being grinded against the wood.

When his dad let go of his arm, he was alarmed when he realizes that his dad was reaching across the table and grabbing the hand sized, wooden pestle.

"Dad please!" Bill cries out as he tries to free his hand, using his freed hand to try to push away his dad's hand. He stops when his dad retaliated by putting on more force at the trapped hand, the pain making him grit his teeth.

"If you stop your yelping and take it like a man, this would go quicker." His dad explains in a calm and detached tone.

Heart pounding in his ears and feeling tears of anger in his eyes, Bill closes his eyes and looks away. He couldn't hold back the shriek of pain as his dad brought down the pestle, the sound of thick wood smacking hard against the flesh of his hand sounding deafening in the kitchen.

First, he felt nothing but then a blinding heat surrounded the area of his knuckles and the dorsal part of his palm; overwhelming pain and burning sensation and for a moment he fear that the skin of his knuckles had ripped and that blood would start to pour out but when he looks down, all he saw that his knuckles and the top part of his hand was shade of dark red, which contrasted sharply against his pale skin. The pain has already started to spread through his fingers and his entire hand, the pain in his wrist and the heel of his hand feeling minuscule.

One of the things that he hates about his dad is how in control he is of his strength; this is the third time he uses the pestle against him and it's unfair that he knew how much strength he needed to put in his arm to deliver the blow, to make sure that he wouldn't end up breaking any bones or skin but instead putting enough force that it would leave his hand bruised and unable to use comfortably for almost two weeks.

And while Bill did cried out, he was proud of himself for not shedding any tears.

"Now, what do you have to say for yourself?"

Bill stares at him with pained resign as he croaks, "I'm suh-suh-sorry."

"Sorry?"

"Suh-sorry for tuh-taking s-s-s-something that d-d-didn't belong to me." Bill ended, humiliation creeping in. Oh how he wanted to crawl inside a hole and curl up into a ball, cradling his injured hand against him while he was at it. Or better yet, find a hole to crawl inside and die.

Then his father let his hand go, snatching his hand away as though he touched something foul, "Get out of my sight." He utters lowly as he places the pestle back inside the mortar.

Gingerly, Bill pulls his hand back, keeping his hurt hand to his chest as he swiftly walks out of the kitchen. Not looking back, he opens the door and walks out, feeling pained and weary. Hitching his book bag, more out of habit than to actually correct it, he hisses when he moved his right arm. When he looks, he sees the dark red handprint in his upper arm, unfortunately in plain sight. He could already see the pity and the laughter in the eyes of his classmates and teachers.

Sullenly, he gently strokes his ring only to pull back in shock. Raising his right hand, he looks at the ring. Seeing nothing out of the ordinary, he pets it again. His ring, specifically the jewel was hot to the touch but weirdly enough; the heat didn't hurt or bothered the finger he was using to stoke it, hell not even the finger in which the ring was on!

Shrugging away the oddity of the situation, he continues his way onward to the school, still stroking the ring and not even noticing the pain of his injured hand; it was as though his hand had become numb.

But he couldn't ignore this strange feeling as though he's being watched but not in a dangerous, intrusive way. But in a way that felt unusually nice, almost safe.

Bill snorts to himself: Who feels safe with the idea and sensation of someone watching you?

"Good morning~" the overly cheerful teacher greets her class with a sugar sweet smile.

The responses to her greeting were grunts or subdued salutations. Some of the students put their cell phones away or kept on texting in secret and looking up at the teacher, hoping not to look suspicious. Bill felt envious of them for he was not allowed to have a cell phone.

As Bill hears his teacher continue with her greetings as she cleans the board, he could already feel a headache forming into the back of his head, her voice grating his nerves. Why is she so happy this early in the morning? On most days, he actually likes his teacher's cheerful, even if half of the time it sounded forced or fake, demeanor but today seem to be turning into one of his "bad" days. Sighing silently, Bill turns back to look at his teacher.

"Okay class, we're going to practice on our Comprehension Skills today. But before we start, can you all please take out your paper assignment from yesterday and place them in the corner? I'm going to go around collecting them."

Sounds of papers being rustled or students pulling out their notebooks filled the class, some still yawning and stretching, others sitting up straight and eager, others being told pointedly to put their cell phones away, and the others, like him, were already wishing that the class would end.

Bill ignores the throb in his hand as he sharpens his pencil with his

own sharpener, the act of curling his fingers painful and uncomfortable, once done he places the pencil on the table as he moves his homework to the side, trying not to pay attention to the guy behind him purposely making his chair and table tremble.

As the teacher goes desk by desk, picking up the papers, the boy behind him stops shaking his chair as the teacher gets to their row. When Mrs. Jefferson got to his desk, he sees that her smile became smaller until it was gone from her face.

Nervously, he asks, "Did I-I-I give y-you the wrong puh-paper?"

"No. Bill, what happened to your hand and arm?"

Bill blinks in disbelief. Really, like it wasn't obvious? The red bruise on the top of his hand was transparent enough to show that it wasn't self-inflicted. And if that wasn't clear enough then the finger shaped mark on his arm was prominent in his arm that told enough to the bystanders that someone with a strong grip had cruelly grabbed him in a purposely hurtful manner.

He could say all that, stutters and all but what came out of his mouth was, "Suh-something fuh-fell on my h-hand."

Everyone in the class snickered. Bill ignores them.

Mrs. Jefferson pointed to his arm, "And that one?"

Bill shrugs in faux nonchalance, "M-my cuh-cousin doesn't k-know his own s-s-strength."

By Mrs. Jefferson's dubious expression, she didn't believe him, especially when he sees the pity in her eyes. He clenches his teeth, irritation and bitterness overtaking him as he lowers his gaze to the table.

Of course; take pity on the child, feel sorry for them but not raise a finger to help them. A good, solid advice or even some comforting words would have been nice but no, let's just pretend we didn't see anything and see if they could work it out themselves!

But what makes you think you deserve any help? Why should they help

you when you're too weak to help yourself? You brought this on yourself; now shut up and take it like a man!

Feeling shame and self-disgust, Bill curls his hands, letting the pain ground him, *punish* him because he deserves to feel pain, he has no right to complain before releasing a deep breath. Swallowing the lump in his throat, Bill tries to pay attention to his teacher.

Today is going to be a long day. And as if to remind him, his stomach growls rather loudly, much to his embarrassment as all eyes turns to him.

Resisting the urge to fidget, Bill sighs as he slouches against his chair; yup, totally a long day.

Bill never thought he would be happy to be inside the school's cafeteria or the fact that he actually wanted to eat the lunch tray of stiff chicken nuggets and lukewarm and soggy fries. Bill waits impatiently in the line, playing with his ring as he focus on nothing but playing with the leg like strands of the ring, the jewel, and the fact that he was going to be the next one to pick up the lunch tray. When it was his turn, he happily grabbed the tray, stuttering out a sincere "thank you" and quickly walking away.

As Bill looks around for an empty table or at least a spot he knows he won't bother anyone when a hand grabbed his arm, specifically the arm that the hand shaped bruise was. Flinching, Bill stops and looks to the side.

Bowers stood there, gripping his arm and smiling at him in what probably what he believed was a "pleasant" grin. Bill wasn't fooled; he stutters but he wasn't stupid.

"Hey there Billy Boy~" He croons in a fake sweet tone. Bill tightens the hold on his lunch tray. "I just see you over here, looking all lonesome and looking for a seat. Why don't you come and sit with us?"

He looks around and notices that Patrick, Victor, and Belch are behind him, surrounding him.

"Nuh-no thank you." He was proud of himself for only stuttering once.

"I insist." The blonde teen hisses through clenched teeth, his grin still wide upon his face.

Bill shakes his head, trying to stay polite even as he wanted to wrench his arm away.

Bowers hums, "Okay then. Since you said no, we'll have it your way."

Alarm bells ring around Bill's head.

"Let me give you a little push to the right direction." And then before Bill could even react, Bowers yanks his arm and then roughly shoves him forward. Not expecting that, Bill trips over his feet and before he could even blink, he falls onto the floor, scraping his knees and elbows, the tray falling out of his hand and sent flying until it landed a few feet away from him, the food spilled all over the floor.

There was a hushed silence in the cafeteria after that. Or maybe it was the pain and the embarrassment that made him deaf to everything else?

Knees and elbows throbbing, along with a dull pain in his chest where he landed and his injured hand getting knocked into the floor, Bill could only stare with detached disbelief at the food, the food he was going to eat, the *only* food he probably could get unless his dad or mom had actually gone outside to buy food today. He gingerly sits up until he was resting on his haunches, still staring at the mess, not wanting to believe; not wanting to look up.

"Oops my bad; I'm sorry Billy Boy, I didn't think you'd be so clumsy! But hey, at least the food hasn't been stepped on. I know you're hungry; I can hear your stomach from here. Go ahead Billy, eat it, I think they clean the floor this morning or maybe it was yesterday?" Bowers jeers as his friends started laughing along with most of the other students.

Anger bubbles underneath his skin.

"What's the matter Billy? Waiting for an invitation? Go on, pick it up

with your hands or bend down and start eating."

Bill looks up at Bowers sharply, eyes narrowing into slits as he glares at the older teen.

Enraged and humiliated, Bill slowly stands up from the floor, fists clenched tightly to his side as he turns to his tormentor, glaring with all the pain, frustration, and rage he is feeling in his heart. He numbly realizes that his ring is strangely becoming hot, his ring finger warming up along with the precious metal.

As he stood there, bravely staring at Bowers down, a dark part of him was satisfied when he sees the surprise and hesitation in Bowers' face. And another, unexplainable part of him, part of him that didn't *feel* like him seems to take cruel joy at the other male's apprehension.

Heart pounding in his chest, the words "fuck you" at the tip of his tongue, Bill decide to do the more responsible action. Giving the older teen a chilling look and a disgusted sneer, Bill turns away and walks out of the cafeteria, the back of his muscles tense and his stride purposeful.

He might not be stronger than him, he might be starving, and he might a worthless weak boy, he still has his pride and Bowers would not take that from him.

Stroking his ring again, he walks towards the nearest, empty class, trying to ignore the itch underneath his skin and the sensation of something urging him to turn back around and make Bowers regret for messing with him. He pushes that unusual feeling away.

His ring still felt hot underneath his touch...

Bill tries to ignore the pounding headache the following afternoon, trying hard to pay attention to his teacher as he explains the phenomenon that is the tectonic plates. He pushes back the nausea as his stomach cramps up.

"Mr. Denbrough."

At hearing his surname, Bill looks up, staring at his teacher's

displeased look before that expression changed to concern.

"Are you alright Mr. Denbrough? You're starting to look a bit pale."

Bill opens his mouth, to lie, to reassure, who knows? But the dryness of his mouth made him reconsider.

"Mr. Hop-Hopkins, c-can I go and d-d-drink from tuh-the water fuh-fuh-fountain?"

Either out of worry or pity, the teacher let him go. This is the only time Bill can appreciate the pity; Mr. Hopkins is a strict teacher who usually hates it when his students take bathroom or drink water from the fountain breaks. So unless you had to go to the nurse or a parent came to pick you up, he'll let you go.

Walking out of the classroom, Bill heads to the closest water fountain, narrowing his eyes at the brightness of the overhead lights. A wave of dizziness passes over him before it was gone in less than six seconds. He brightens up when he see the water fountain.

When he took his first drink, he almost moans at the coolness of the water. The water was refreshing and while his stomach still hurt with the way it continue to cramp up, it seem to have settle down some. Once he drinks his fill, he drags himself back to class.

He just wants this day to be over already...

When the class was finally dismissed and everyone can leave to go home, Bill places his notebooks into his bag, mix feelings of relief and apprehension warring inside of him.

He honestly had forgotten that today was Friday. He doesn't know how to feel about that.

Frowning as he slung his book bag on his bag, Bill heads out of the classroom and into the crowded hallway, trying to blend in with the crowd. The moment he was outside, he heads towards the direction of his house, feeling relieved when he saw no sight or hair of Bowers and his gang.

As he walks through the more shadowy parts of the streets, since his eyes still felt sensitive to the sun, he shakes his head when he feels another wave of dizziness pass him. Stopping for a moment, he holds his head as he leans against a building, the building right next to the entry of an alley. After a minute passes he blinks and leans away from the building.

But then he stops and turns to the alley as the nausea comes back, leaning against one of the trash cans as he gags, for a minute fearing that he was going to throw up. But when nothing came up, he takes in a deep breath and backs away from the trash cans. Feeling sweat running down his hairlines, he tries to blink away the black spots in his eyes. But tries as he might, his vision doesn't clear up. Bill closes his eyes; the area he was standing on spinning and he tries to will away the nausea that continues to bother him.

Maybe he can keep his eyes close until the dizziness and the urge to vomit goes away? After all, his parents weren't eager for him to reach home. He can stay here until he feels a bit better...

A moment later, Bill faints...

When Bill wakes up, he blinks in confusion to find himself on the ground and the right side of his head throbbing in pain. Sitting up slowly, Bill furrows his eyebrows as he raises a hand to gently touch his face. Flinching, he feels worried when his fingers touch the bump on his temple, pulling his hand away to see blood coating his fingers. Bewildered and concerned, he continues to stare at his fingers in disbelief.

"I didn't think someone could make fainting look so graceful pretty boy." A playful and teasing tone remarks from his right, startling him.

When he turns a bit to look he sees a boy sitting next to him. The same boy he saw in his dreams.

He must have hit his head harder than he thought...

"W-who—what—I-I-I—" suddenly tongue tied, he could only motion

his hand in a somewhat jerky and confusing manner.

"Take a deep breath Bill; I can't understand those hand gestures."

Bill looks at him sharply, "H-h-how did y-you know muh-my n-n-name?"

"Ah and he speaks!" the other teen exclaims in a merry way.

"Y-you didn't a-a-answer my q-question."

The boy tilts his head, his smile wide but his eyes were inscrutable, "You told me."

"Nuh-no I didn't!"

The boy continues on, not looking even slightly concerned at Bill's glower, "When you get home, you should get something eat. It's not healthy for you to go through a long period of time not eating."

"I w-would if muh-my p-parents actually b-buy fuh-food." Bill responds bitterly.

The teenager looks at him silently and then, "Check on the bottom cabinet on the right side of the refrigerator. There's a pack of crackers. I think they are called Ritz?"

Bill looks at him in astonishment, "Wait a m-minute, h-h-how can y-you know t-that?"

"I saw it."

Bill could only look at the boy in confusion.

"Don't furrow your eyebrows too much or you'll start to get early wrinkles and look ugly as fuck."

Bill blinks in surprise.

"Or at least that's what my mama used to say."

"U-u-used to?" he asks hesitantly.

There was an odd look in the boy's eyes, looking away for a moment, apparently listening to something only he can hear before he turns to look at him.

"While I really don't mind talking to you or about how my mama had a weird sense of humor but I think it's best if you get up."

Bill raises an eyebrow, "B-but I a-a-am up."

The gentle yet playful smile on the other male's face started to fade, "Get up Bill. Open your eyes."

"I d-do huh-have my e-eyes open!" Bill responds in frustration, not understanding.

"Wake up Bill." And then the boy turns away, dismissing him.

"I am—"

"Wake up!" And then the boy turns back to him but instead of the soft, pleasant, and attractive—not something he would ever say out loud—face he was greeted with a completely horrific and disgusting face. Where his eyes were suppose to be, were cruelly ripped out, the optic nerves hanging out from the eye sockets, blood pooling down his cheeks and the skin around the area of the eyes ripped and pulled back. All that greeted him were empty, black voids.

The lower part of his jaw was missing, blood all over his neck and collarbones, the skin of his throat and neck gone, muscles and tendons twitching and his tongue hanging out uselessly. Bill could have sworn he saw a few remaining teeth, or at least what was missing of them since some of them were in pieces, were clinging to the blood and his shirt.

Petrified, Bill opens his mouth to scream—

Bill jerks himself awake, blinking wearily. Only to freeze when he's greeted with wide, manic bloodshot eyes up close and personal to his face.

Letting out a scream of fright he, without thinking, head butts the person in front of him, a loud crack echoing in the alley. Blinking

away the black spots in his eyes and the pain in his forehead—why didn't Hollywood explain that this shit actually hurts in real life?—he pushes the writhing body off of him, scrabbling away on his back and elbows until he was able to stand up. Once on his two feet, he runs, not looking behind him.

As he runs he realizes that he doesn't feel the familiar weight of his book bag and he curses. The asshole must have taken it off of him when he was unconscious. Seeing stack of box crates, Bill hides behind them, watching and waiting, trying to see if the creep had followed him.

As minutes pass and nothing happen Bill was about to leave his hiding spot until he saw a body approaching.

It was a lanky guy, older than him but younger than most adults he usually sees with wrinkled and dirty jeans and a gray hoodie than have seen better days, rubbing his nose with his sleeve before scratching the back of his neck, twitching and pacing back and forth as his eyes moved around frantically. He had a noticeable red bruise on his forehead. So that's the creep?

Bill stays motionless and silent, nervous and afraid.

As he anxiously waits, he watches as the guy runs a hand through his shaggy hair before walking off. Even as the male walks off, Bill makes no move to leave his spot. After waiting for a while, maybe for ten or fifteen minutes, he cautiously moves away from the crates, looking around suspiciously before walking towards the direction he came from.

After reaching the alley he got out from, he walks in slowly and carefully, paying attention to any sudden noise. When he sees or hears nothing, he looks around the ground, trying to see if he sees his book bag. As he walks further in, he finds his book bag, turned inside out and all his papers and notebooks around the ground. Grumbling he picks them up hurriedly and shoving them inside the bag, not wanting to stay in the alley for too long. He can straighten or clean up his stuff later.

When he made sure that he had everything, he hurriedly leaves the

alley and continues onward to his house. As he walks, he goes to pet the ring when a sting made him look down. Below the knuckle and the web between the ring and middle finger was bruised. He narrows his eyes in confusion before realization hits him.

The asshole was trying to steal his ring!

Frowning, Bill massages the hurt area gently, still feeling the familiar ache in his other hand, the fear and the adrenaline making him forget about his other injuries. He sighs to himself.

Today was just not his day...

When Bill got home, he merely locks the door and heads up the stairs, walking straight into his room as he threw the book bag on the floor. Feeling tired yet dirty, Bill merely picks up his towel and heads towards the bathroom, locking it and undressing. As he turns on the shower and waits for the water to heat up, Bill looks at his reflection.

He was a bit surprised but not much when he sees blood caked on his right temple; just like in the dream. Shuddering, he looks at the other bruise on his forehead, the bruise he got by stupidly head butting another person. Sure, that might have gotten him out of trouble but he's already feeling an ache in his forehead besides the headache from before that still throbs behind the back of his eyes.

Looking at his reflection in disappointment and slight disgust at his abnormally thin face and body, Bill turns himself away and gets in the shower, trying to wash away the stress and aches from today.

Bill was tempted to go back to his room and forget about checking to see if there really were crackers hidden in the bottom cabinet, the stale smell of vomit still inside the kitchen and making him almost loose his appetite before forcefully trying to ignore it and walking over to the cabinet, fiddling with his pajama sleeve. As he goes to the last door of the cabinet, next to the fridge, he opens it and checks inside. As he looks around, feeling a mix of irritation and disappointment when he doesn't see anything right away, his eyes widen when he sees a barely visible but closed brown packet of Ritz

crackers.

Shock, Bill pulls it out from the cabinet and stares at it, disbelief in his eyes. Hardly believing his luck—and ignoring the fact that his fucking dream, no, that weird and terrifying boy, literally told him to check under the cabinets—he quickly closes the door to the cabinet and runs up the stairs and into his room.

He didn't even hesitate to open up the packet but he did eat slowly, not wanting to eat too quickly and end up vomiting it out. Due to his slow eating, he was surprise that he already got full by the time he got to the middle of the packet. Deciding to save it for later, he puts the crackers inside his beside drawer and lies down on the bed, blinking tiredly at his ceiling.

Feeling full, tired, and surprisingly relaxed, it didn't take long for Bill to fall asleep.

The next time Bill woke up he had to closes his eyes when the light of the room hits him directly, turning to his side as he blinks slowly. When he was able to open his eyes without feeling like the light was trying to blind him, he stares at his clock. It read 3:25 AM.

Stretching, Bill arches his back like a cat and made an odd noise than could be confused for a purr as he sits up and out of habit, rubs his eyes with the sleeve of his pajama shirt, the sleeves pretty long as it used to belong to his granddad, who sadly died when he was two and his grandma gave it to him when he was a little older. While old, it was one of the most comfortable night shirts he has ever owned, even if it was a hand me down.

"Okay, that's pretty damn adorable."

Squeaking out of surprise, Bill turns sharply to his side. His eyes widen before he backs away, his fists rise up in protection. It's the boy again!

The boy raises his hand in a placating manner, "Woah, calm down big guy!"

"W-who a-a-a-are you! *What* are you?!"

The boy pauses at the question, his face carefully blank as he eyes Bill. Bill starts to feel nervous.

And then those doe eyes become sheepish, "I'm sorry."

"Huh?" Bill was flabbergasted.

"I didn't want to scare you; I gain nothing in making you frightened of me but I didn't know how else to wake you up."

Bill stares at the boy, slowly lowering his fists, "W-wake muh-me up? Don't tuh-tuh-tell me this is a-a-another dream."

"You got it pretty boy." The other teen says with miniscule smile and shrugging with one shoulder.

"But why; w-why was it so i-i-important for me t-to wake u-u-up? Not that I-I wasn't guh-grateful by the w-w-way but?"

"You set me free;" here, the teen's expression turns serious, "And I wasn't lying when I said that I will offer my services to you." Then he chuckles bitterly, "Unfortunately I'm too weak to do anything else but warn you; for now at least."

Bill eyes him curiously, head tilted a bit before his eyes went wide, "Y-y-you can only cuh-communicate w-w-with me t-t-t-through my d-dreams!"

"Bingo! I always knew that you're a smart kid Bill."

Bill was embarrassed to realize that he was flushing at the compliment, a pleasant and giddy feeling in his heart before shaking his head and scowling at himself. What was he? A desperate, love starved puppy?

"Tuh-that doesn't e-e-explain who you a-are or whu-what you are."

The boy's eyes sadden, "I wish I can explain it but I don't even know myself."

Bill looks at the boy in confusion.

"And as for who am I? Well I'll tell you but not today."

"Why nuh-not?"

The dark haired teen smirks tiredly, "Because you're about to wake up."

"What? Oh cuh-come on—"

Bill snaps awake, blinking in irritation at his ceiling before turning to his side before turning to the other side when the light from the sun nearly blinds him. Bill was annoyed that he slept the whole night with the lights on. When he was sure that sun or the light in his room wouldn't bother his eyesight, he stares at the clock in his bedside table.

7:24 AM. Too damn early, why did he wake up so early? Was it so fucking difficult to learn the name of the boy that apparently visits in his dreams?

Or maybe it was better that way because it was all in his head and he was just hallucinating due to the fact that he hardly had been eating well for the past three days?

As he thought of that he starts to feel a familiar heat in his ring finger. Bill looks down at his ring before poking it. Yup, it was warm to the touch and so was the area surrounding it.

Bill couldn't believe that his ring had just sassed him!

3. All Alone and Feeling So Apart

Okay guys, this chapter really kicked my ass; chapter 3 gave me the most trouble to write and I just hope you guys are able to enjoy it.
^_";;

Warning: (Flashback) Physical Child Abuse, Physical Harm, Threats of Physical Harm or Dismemberment, Bullying, Assholes being Assholes (seriously, some of the things that they say are downright rude and/or disgusting), and Child Neglect. If I'm missing anything or forgot to tag something: Let me know! I do not want to trigger someone. :/

Disclaimer: I do not own Bill, Richie, or anything else related to IT.

Chapter 3: All Alone and Feeling So Apart

Seeing no use in going back to sleep, Bill grumpily pushes away his blankets and drags himself to the bathroom. Rubbing his eyes, he closes the door behind him and starts his morning routine. Once he was done relieving himself and washing his teeth, he absentmindedly looks at the mirror only to back off in surprise.

The cut and bruise that should have been on the right side of his face, specifically his temple was gone! Raising a shaking hand, he touches the area where he should have scabbed over. But nothing and even the slight bruise in his cheek was gone, only smooth skin tight over his unusually protruding cheekbones.

Did he imagine them yesterday?

Scratching his scalp with his left hand he ponders the situation before belatedly realizing that his left hand didn't hurt at all. Raising his hand he stares at his hand with shock when he sees that his hand was just as smooth and unblemished. That's impossible... His hand should had been blue and black today instead of snowy white.

Confused and anxious, Bill continues to stare at his hand and then looks at his right arm.

Nothing... He was healed. In fact, even the aches and soreness from yesterday was gone as well.

Disturbed, Bill leaves the bathroom with furrowed eyebrows, petting the ring lightly as he thinks about the situation.

What the hell was going on? How can he be healed?

Bill looks at his ring. Was it the ring? Was the ring the cause of his body being in good, physical health?

Curious yet uneasy, Bill tenses in surprise when his stomach growls. Pursing his lips, Bill sighs and takes out the half filled packet of Ritz crackers. As he nibbled on them absentmindedly, Bill couldn't help but pause as he looks at his bedside table lamp.

Didn't he leave the light of lamp on?

Eyebrows raised, Bill tugs on the string of the lamp, eyebrows disappearing into his hairline when the lamp did nothing. Trying again, he gained the same results. After trying two more times, he sits back, looking at the lamp in suspicion. Didn't he just change the light bulb a few days ago? Come to think of it, why does the light in his room look so dim? The usually bright room seems to cast random shadows all across his room.

Not wanting to think anymore of the already odd situation, Bill goes back to eating his crackers, eying his laundry basket. It looks like he needs to do his laundry.

Bill's shoulders drops, unenthused and already wishing he could just go back to sleep but he already knew that's going to be impossible. He already slept more than eight hours and his mind was already whirling restlessly, which would make sleeping impossible.

No longer feeling hungry, he put away the remaining crackers, only nine crackers inside the packet, as he tried to ignore the uncomfortable fluttering inside his stomach and the way his belly kept on protesting in not being well fed as he grabs his laundry basket and leaves his room.

Going down the stairs quietly, Bill looks around subtly as he tries to

see if either of his parents was downstairs.

Like for the past three days, downstairs was devoid of life.

Pursing his lips at the mix feelings he's experiencing at the knowledge, Bill continues onward and into the basement, nose crinkling at the still horrid smell that remains in the kitchen as he heads down the stairs of the basement.

Once he was down there, he started separating his clothes into piles. When he was done, he went to go and check to see if they had laundry detergent, which they did thank God, and turn on the machine. Bill wouldn't been to enthused in cleaning his clothes if he had no laundry detergent; he tried it once with dish soap when he needed to clean his clothes for school and while they were clean, it didn't do the job correctly and the smell didn't diminished, which of course his other peers noticed and started to mock and jeer at his "body odor".

Frowning at the memory, Bill pushes those thoughts to the back of his mind and focus back on his job, wanting to start early and end early.

Bill eyes the kitchen in distaste as he puts on a pair of yellow gloves as he stares at the large, dried up vomit inside the sink and just outside the sink. At least it didn't fell on the floor, which was a small blessing and he was glad that it was inside the sink, easier to clean and he doesn't have to bend down to clean in from the hardwood floor.

Trying not to breathe in, Bill turns on the faucet, letting the water run hot as he grabs a bottle of bleach from underneath the cabinets; the moment he sees the steam, he grabs a cup and fills in with water before tilting the cup over the vomit. Repeating the process, he turns off the faucet and starts spraying the area. Once he was sure that the area was covered—and almost hacking out a lung—he continues towards the counter where it was stick and dried up as well.

As he waited for about five minutes, he takes the scrub brush and starts to clean the area. The mix smell of bleach and throw up made

him gag and his eyes water but he ignores it as he concentrated on his job, one hand holding the counter and the other scrubbing furiously. As Bill clean, he let his mind wander.

Today was sort of a good day. The Bowers' gang was absent today in school, which made the mocking and bullying lessen for the day, although some still find it funny to mock his stutter. He couldn't complain, he can handle the insensitive and mean teasing from his peers and he didn't pay mind to them much since it's something he was sadly used to. He hoped that it meant that he had grown a thicker skin.

He got an A+ on two of his test and his teachers seem to be less frustrated with him today, so that's a win. He was even able to pack a lunch for himself even though there wasn't much variety in his house but it was still something. He didn't go hungry today in the morning or in lunch time.

Yeah, today was a pretty decent day. It would have been a good day if only his stomach would stop hurting!

Bill pressed a hand on his stomach, as if making pressure on his belly would make it stop cramping up. He places his forehead on his palm, feeling a bit lightheaded as he squirmed in his seat as his stomach kept on cramping and gurgling.

He breathed in sharply when the bell rang, signifying that everyone can all go home. He waited until everyone left, not wanting to be pressed up against anybody or being shoved up against the lockers. When he saw the last person leave did he slowly stand up from the table and put everything in his bag. The hairs on his arms stood up as he closes his book bag and leave the empty classroom.

Feeling a slight chill, Bill rubbed his arms as he walked tersely, nauseas rising up and down his gullet as the pain in his stomach intensified the longer he kept on moving. As he continue onward, he never thought he be happy to see his house.

When he reached his house, he quickly opened the door, the nauseas getting worse as he held back the urge to gag. Bill was surprised to see both of his parents downstairs. But before he could even say a word, Bill let the book bag fall from his shoulders and next to the door before he ran

up the stairs, gagging all the way and hoping he could get to the bathroom on time.

He didn't.

Bill tripped on the last step, falling on his hands and knees, his palms and knees throbbing and instead of a pained yelp coming out of his mouth, what escaped was vomit; a whole lot. Mortified and dismayed, Bill shakily raised a hand to wipe his mouth as he stared at his mess.

Out of nowhere, he feels a big and strong hand grip his hair and one minute, he's staring at the mess on the floor and the next his face is being slammed against the floor, against his vomit. Pain blossomed all over his nose and he tried to push himself away the spew. But if anything, the hand on his hair only grinded his face harder on the floor and this time, he couldn't stop the squeal of pain escaping his lips.

"You disgusting, stupid child; haven't I teach you some manners? Was it so difficult to greet the people inside the house the moment you enter, to pick up after yourself? Is that so hard to do boy?!"

Bill dug his nails at the floor, trying to endure the pain that spread all over his face as he tries to stutter a reply, no longer pushing himself up as to not anger his father. But then he tensed up when his stomach gurgled and he realized with horror to what that meant. He started struggling again.

"Duh-dad let muh-me up!" he tried to ignore the way vomit clung to his lips and some getting into his mouth due to his struggle. Underneath the revolting taste of spew, he could detect a taste of iron.

"Who are you to order me around boy?!"

"Puh-please! Please l-l-let me u-up!"

"I think I should keep you like this; how else will you learn your lesson?"

"I'm sorry! I'm sorry sorry sorry! I'm sorry!" Bill cried out desperately as he started to claw at the floor, ignoring the pain in his fingertips.

"What's the rush Bill?"

Flushing in mortification, Bill answered, "I h-have to u-u-use the buh-

bathroom!"

His dad just snorted, "You already made a mess, what's more going to do?"

"Puh-please dad. Please!" he sobbed as he could feel tears clinging to his eyelashes.

His dad made a disgusted noise, "Stop your ridiculous crying; I have no girls in my house! I should let you shit on yourself, let that humble you and teach you a lesson."

Bill let out a low pitched whine at that, pressing his thighs together and tightening his entrance as he shook.

Then his dad started to pull on his hair and Bill, not wanting to lose any hair, followed the motion until he was on his knees.

"I'm going to be nice and let you go but you better clean this shit up or the next time I will shove your head inside the toilet, whether if it's clean or not."

He nodded or tried to in understanding, "Y-yes dad."

When his dad let him, he quickly ran, not caring that he almost slipped into his mess before entering the bathroom, locking it, and doing his business. As he sat there, feeling miserable and achy, he panicked when he felt vomit rising up. Grabbing the trash can quickly Bill threw up inside the can, gripping it tightly as his body trembled, feeling a strong chill spreading all over his body.

After who knows how long, Bill was able to put the trash can down, clean up, and flushed the toilet, twice.

Feeling weak limbed, Bill washed his hands as he reluctantly looked at his reflection.

His face was a mess. His chin, mouth, and one side of his cheek were dirty with semi-dried vomit. Hell, he even had throw up clinging to his nose. He also had blood, which already had stopped running, down his nose and going down his lips. Huh, well now he knew why he tasted iron in his mouth.

Bill touched his nose and while it hurt, he was glad that it wasn't broken. By tomorrow, he knew it was going to be black and blue and probably around his cheekbones as well.

Besides the redness on his nose and surrounding the area, he was abnormally pale and he could see sheen of sweat on his hairline.

Sighing unevenly, he cups his hands and starts to gently wash his face. When he was done, he grabbed the toothbrush and started to brush his teeth, hoping that it was the last time he throws up. Just as he was finishing, he heard and felt his stomach gurgle. Without thinking about it, he pushed down his pants and sat down.

Shaking, he hid his face in his hands, ignoring the noises and the smell inside the bathroom. Ignored the pain in his face and ignored the dirty footprints that he left behind due to his rush and not looking where he was stepping at.

And he completely ignored the pathetic whimpers that came out of his lips as tears ran down his face, biting his bottom lip as he tried to silence his weeping.

Why does he keep fucking up?

Bill gasps and blinks in surprise as he feels tears running down his face. Exasperated with himself, he roughly wipes them away, being careful not to let the bleach touch his face. As he focuses back to the present, he feels an odd sensation of heat all over his body, specifically behind him, as though there was something hot being pressed against his back and the back of his neck. And of course, the familiar heat on his ring finger.

Confused yet weirdly content, Bill goes back to his work.

Bill knocks gently on his parents' door. Receiving no response, Bill hesitates before opening the door silently as he looks around nervously. He didn't see his father in the bed, which was pretty odd now that he thinks about it, while his mom was now turned to her other side, still unmoving.

Walking around the bed until he was in front of her, Bill stares at his mother.

She opens her eyes blearily to look at him, blinking twice before focusing her eyes on something beyond his face. Discouraged but not surprised, Bill tentatively speaks up.

"Mom, wuh-why don't y-you get up and s-s-stretch a bit? Y-your back muh-must be h-h-hurting."

His mom didn't respond to him.

"Puh-please mom; just fuh-for a little w-while. Then y-you can go buh-back to bed."

When he still didn't receive a respond or even a twitch, Bill sighs quietly and was about to walk off when he sees his mom stiffly and slowly sit up. With wide eyes, he sees his mother stand up from the bed and walks off. As he looks from the bedroom door, he sees that his mom had walked towards the bathroom. It wasn't much but at least she got up and did something.

Exhaling, Bill turns back to the room and goes to his parents' bed, taking off the bed sheets and the pillow cases. His parents used to do it but now? It's like they live in their own little world— his mom is some kind place he can't see and a world only his dad can go when he gets drunk— that not even doing simple chores inside their own room can break them out from whatever the place their minds wander to.

As Bill dress up the bed and the pillows, he couldn't help but notice a picture frame placed face down on the bedside table. Curious, Bill picks up the picture frame and when he sees who it is, his eyes soften and a bittersweet smile spreads across his face.

It was a picture of him holding a month old Georgie. His parents were surprised that when Georgie was passed to him—when he was finally allowed to hold him—Georgie hardly fussed. He didn't even yip. Only stared at him with those innocent and curious eyes as he blow little spit bubbles at him. He remembered laughing as he brought him closer to him and greeting him, stutters and all.

As he looks at the picture, he couldn't help but noticed that while he had a smile on his face, a genuine one at least, his eyes looked off; his eyes looked tired and looking far too mature for a six year old. He recognized the sorrow in the eyes of his six year old self. The same sorrow he sees when he forces himself to wakes up and he looks into the mirror every morning.

Feeling bone weary, Bill places the photo frame back on the table, leaving it face down like before as he goes back to dressing up the bed. As he raises the bed to tuck the corner of the bed sheet, he sees a little orange bottle with a white bottle cap. When he picks it up, he notices that it's a pill bottle. Not wanting to leave it lying around and make either of his parents think that he threw it away, Bill opens the drawer from the bedside table and was about to put it in when he pauses.

Inside the drawer were four or maybe five twenty dollar bills.

Bill stares at the money with wide eyes, pill bottle still in his hand as he grips the drawer knob tightly.

His mom had money, he knew it was hers because if it were his dad's he would had spent it a long time ago, she had money and yet she refused to use it. She had money to buy groceries and yet here she was, lying on a bed and doing nothing while no one had anything to eat. Or at least he didn't since he bets that his dad can find a way to feed himself while his mom honestly didn't seem to care if she had enough food in her body.

Bill drops the bottle of pills inside the drawer and inched his fingers close to the money only to stop.

What was he doing? He can't take his mom's money. What right did he have in taking something that doesn't belong to him? Isn't that what his father always drilled into his head?

(He can still feel a phantom pain in his hand)

Hearing a noise behind him, Bill tenses and slowly looks behind him. When he saw that it was just his mother entering the room, he goes lax. He eyes her as she sits on top of the bed, still not uttering a word

to him as she stares at her toes. Bill presses his lips together, looking at her and then at the drawer before looking back at her. Maybe if he...

"Mom," She barely acknowledged him but he continues nonetheless, "If it's nuh-not too muh-muh-much t-trouble, do you tuh-think it's okay if I-I-I use the muh-money to buy s-s-s-some fuh-food?" he questions, his anxiety making him stutter more than usual.

At that inquiry, his mom raises her head and stares at him, still with the same blank face. Seeing that he has her attention, he continues.

"I-is just t-that there is nuh-nuh-no fuh-food and I-I-I thought that I cuh-could buy s-s-s-some?"

His response was a slow blink, the silence tense and uncomfortable and then she starts to lay down, facing him but now refusing to look at him.

Bill sighs uneasily, chewing on his bottom lip, "I-is it o-okay with y-you?"

Once again there was no response, not even a twitch.

Deciding to test something, Bill goes back to the drawer and looks at his mom, staring at her as he takes the money and slowly takes it out. Once out in the open, Bill stands still and waits. When he got no reaction, he takes the money and shoves it in his jeans' pocket. Seeing no negative actions or even a displeased frown, Bill leaves the money on his pocket.

"M-mom, I tuh-took the muh-muh-money. It's for fuh-food, ruh-really." He reassures with a small and tired smile.

Already knowing that he won't get a response, Bill reaches forward and pulls at the folded blanket that he left on the end of the bed and covers his mother's body, tucking the blanket around her and making sure her legs and her hands were underneath the blanket.

As Bill steps back a little, he couldn't help but stare at his mom, wondering what exactly happen to leave his mother like this. She might have not have been the strongest, or the warmest, or even the

most helpful—he bitterly remembers the time his father sat in front of him and started tearing him apart by listing all the things that he couldn't stand about him; it took a lot of willpower not to cry as his mom just washed the dishes quietly, not even looking at him as his father spat out words that ripped into his self-esteem—but she wasn't this...weak willed. Or least, he didn't think so...

Looking down at his mom, Bill raises his hand, letting it hover for a moment in the air before gingerly stroking his mom's hair. Feeling his heart in his throat, Bill blinks rapidly, urging away the well known sting in his eyes, trying desperately to clear his vision, he leans down and places a tender kiss on his mother's forehead.

Letting his hand hang limply at his side, Bill walks out of the room, suddenly finding it difficult to breathe as he turns off the lights and gently closes the door. As he feels his face start to become warm and his breathing coming out uneven, Bill frowns in frustration when he feels the first tear run down his face.

Raising his right hand to wipe his face, he wonders about the odd texture on his face before remembering about the ring on his finger. Pulling his hand back, Bill went to clean the ring when he feels the ring *pulse* then feeling the familiar heat on his finger.

Not knowing what else to do about this odd yet unsurprisingly reaction, Bill strokes the ring. While still warm, it wasn't as hot as it was a few seconds ago. Despite the weird and slightly creepy situation, Bill wouldn't help but shake his head and smile.

When Bill enters the grocery store, a red shopping cart in his hand, he couldn't help but shiver. While it was May and it was unusually hot today, the coldness inside the store surprised him and made him wished that he had brought along his jacket.

Deciding to get it over with, Bill tries to get the essentials.

As he walks around, picking the items such as bread, milk, butter, and eggs, he eyes the cereal boxes, trying to find his two favorite cereals which were "Cookie Crisp" and "French Toast Crunch". When he finds them, they were by the top shelf. Now, Bill isn't exactly short

but that's high even for him. With a disgruntled sigh, he stands on his tippy toes and tries to grab one of the box, letting a frustrated groan when his fingertips only touch the shelf and not the box.

Getting tired of being on his toes and getting no results, Bill thought of just forgetting in getting the cereals all together when suddenly, a long purple stick—no a purple cane with pink flower petals made contact with one of the cereal and made it stumble forward. Reacting quickly, Bill catches the "Cookie Crisp" box. Blinking in astonishment, Bill turns to the owner of the cane.

It was a woman, older than his mom but definitely younger than most elderly women he has seen around Derry with shocking *silver* hair that reached past her shoulder blades and pale brown eyes, almost the same shade of honey. There was this oddly playful aura surrounding this woman and kindness shine unabashedly in her eyes, her scarlet red lips spread wide in a grin.

Bill couldn't help but smile back but he didn't lower his guard down. The adults in Derry always find a way to disappoint him.

"Tuh-thank you muh-ma'am."

She waves a hand dismissively, "It's no problem honey. We're both too short and this cane can be used for more than to help me walk."

Bill had noticed that she seem to favor her right leg; maybe an old injury?

"Is there another box that you want dearie?"

Focusing back on her face, Bill bit his bottom lip, unexpectedly shy before pointing to the red box.

The older lady hums before doing the same thing she did with the other cereal box, Bill catching it and placing it next to the other cereal box inside the cart.

"Thank you." He repeats again with a tiny, grateful smile.

"No problem dearie, I'm happy to help." She replies with a bright smile, "The name's Angelica. What's yours honey?"

Bill, not really knowing how to react to actual kindness or the pet names she been calling him, sputtered for a moment before stammering out, "Bill—my nuh-name is Bill."

"Well Bill, it's nice to meet you. I just moved here two weeks ago and I must say you're probably the only child that I have encountered that seems approachable and respectable."

Bill duck his head down in embarrassment and delight, "Tuh-thank you."

"But I must wonder, what's a child like you doing by yourself and grocery shopping of all things?"

"I'm fuh-fuh-fourteen ma'am, nuh-not a k-kid. And I-I-I'm doing my puh-parents a fuh-favor."

"What a kind boy you are then." She quips with a smile but her eyes didn't look as bright as before, "Anyway, let me leave you to your shopping. Your parents probably don't want you out of the house for too long."

It took effort not to wince at the statement.

"I'll see you around Bill." Angelica says with a wave as she turns around but before she disappeared into the other isle, she stares at him with somber eyes, "You should eat a little more dear; you look ready to fall apart." And with that she was gone.

And just like her presence was gone, so was the warmth that had inexplicably surrounded them in some kind of weird little bubble, leaving him cold and drained.

All of the sudden, he wanted to go home.

"You should eat a little more dear; you look ready to fall apart." Someone, a boy, mocks from behind him, his mimicry of the older woman's voice sounding high pitched and nasally instead of buttery smooth.

Internally groaning, Bill turns to look at the boy.

He was about his age with smarmy smile and an oily face covered with acne. His friend that was next to him looked a bit better but his smile was just as off putting as his friends. Unfortunately, they were boys in his classroom and when it wasn't Bowers and his gang, it was his other peers, these two in particular. Not really wanting to deal with them he decides to ignore them and move along, already gotten what he wanted from this isle.

"I think the old bag is right mush mouth, it's not good to be so skinny. After all, a good girl looks better with curves."

Bill rolls his eyes. He gets it, he's really skinny, verging to the unhealthy way—at least that's what he thinks since people been giving him pitying and worried glances—but that doesn't automatically define his looks as feminine.

"Don't shame Denbrough Fred; he's just trying to keep his figure."

Fred, the one with the skin problem, snorts, "You're right Elliot; I keep forgetting that bulimia is the new in. How's that working for you freak?"

Bill turns his head sharply to stare at the two boys, indignation and disgust warring inside of him.

How can they be so repugnant? How could they joke about an illness as serious as that? How could they mock him, twist his situation around when everyone clearly knew what was going on, when there were others suffering from that disorder?!

"No, no Fred. I heard last time that he refused to eat his lunch. This little shit went from bulimia to straight up anorexia!"

Then they started cackling.

Repulsed, Bill continued to glare at his classmate.

"You guys disgust me." Bill hissed, not even noticing that he didn't stutter at all due to the sheer anger and revulsion of his two classmates in front of him. He could vaguely feel the familiar burning heat in his ring finger or maybe that just his anger?

Then the laughter stops.

"What did you say you little bitch?"

Bill refused to take the words back, eyes still narrowed at them.

"Look at that Elliot, Denbrough here thinks he's tough little shit."

Elliot smirks, "Maybe we should teach him a little...lesson?"

Fred snickers in ill-intent glee, eyes glinting with malice, "We should."

Bill bit his bottom lip, backing one step before making himself stop. He wasn't going to show fear to these assholes.

Standing up straight, he eyes them as he grips the red cart tightly, his knuckles popping out and turning into an alarming shade of white.

Oddly enough, one of the overhead lights flickers, the lights blinking slowly and then rapidly, the static humming somewhat loudly before the light bulbs burned out, casting silhouettes behind the two bullies.

Bill didn't know why he paid attention to those details until he sees something in the shelf tremble. He couldn't help but blink in astonishment. Did he really see the glass jar of pickles shake?

"Hey freak, don't ignore us!"

Bill snaps his eyes to the two pigs in front of him.

"This should teach you to keep your mouth shut!" Elliot threatens as he took a step forward, Fred still smirking from behind him.

And then Bill watched with disbelief as the glass jar of pickles stumble forward and fall—right on top Fred's head!

The sound of glass breaking on someone's skull was surprisingly loud, a hush silence filling the area where everyone stood. Then they see Fred stagger before falling forward, his body smacking loudly against the tile floor.

"Fred?!" Elliot cried out in shock as Bill could only stare numbly at the scene.

Bill watches silently as one of the employees appeared by the two boy's side, checking on the knocked out teen. Not wanting to be there any longer, Bill walks away, walking as far away as possible and heading towards a random isle.

As much as he wanted to go home, he still needed a few things to buy; so he straightens himself and continues his grocery shopping.

When Bill paid everything and tied the bags along the bars of the cart and tying them close, he made sure that everything was in place and that he left nothing behind before he begin his walk home, feeling a sense of accomplishment.

The sun was setting low much to his surprise and he couldn't help but admire the breathtaking colors of the sunset. A soft burst of wind ruffled his bangs and he couldn't help but close his eyes.

It felt like years that he could actually stand there and enjoy the simple things that nature has bestowed them, things that people that don't take the time to appreciate and things that he hadn't had the time to watch and wonder. Opening his eyes and looking at the sun once again, he wished he had his notebook and his color pencils with him...

Shaking his head, Bill goes to move forward when something caught his eyes. Tilting his head, Bill stares at his shadow from the tall building in front of him. His shadow looked...odd. His shadow looks as though it has shrunken and while thin, it looked more filled than he did. But then again, shadows were quite tricky and maybe he was just paying to unnecessary details?

But then, why didn't the shadow from the cart appear? And his head wasn't even showing; looking as though he was missing his head. Running a hand through his hair, Bill continues to look at it until he realize belatedly. His shadow didn't copy him.

Staring at the wall anxiously, Bill looks behind him, trying to see if

someone was behind him. But there wasn't anyone behind him. Looking back, his eyes widen when he sees his shadow, his real shadow that was holding on to the cart. Watching the one that belongs to him, he looks at the shadow next to him, eying with slight fear.

The second shadow moves a bit, as if turning to look at him, and out of nowhere waves at him.

Bill jumps back in fright, letting out a gasp of shock. He releases another one when he feels a hand grabbing to his shoulder tightly.

"I suggest if you know what's good for you freak, that you'll do as I say."

Face paling and his heart in his throat, Bill took a chance and looks behind him.

Elliot.

Shit...

"W-w-whu-what do y-you w-wuh-want?"

"You're going to be a good freak and follow me here, right in between these two buildings, where no one can see us. And if you don't do as I say? Well..."

Bill swore his heart stopped when he feels something sharp in the middle of his back.

Elliot has a knife...

Oh God...

Bill's grip on his cart tightens. When he looks forward, he's surprised to see the second shadow, the one from before, was now gone.

"You better let that go; I don't trust you pulling on some weird shit."

Eying the red cart with sad and worried eyes, Bill forces himself to let go and let himself be dragged by the other teen. The moment they

reach the place, Elliot moves away from behind him, letting go of his shoulder only to grab his wrist instead and stand in front of him.

Wanting to get this over with, Bills exhales then asks, "W-what do yuh-you want E-E-Elliot?"

"Oh not much; I just need a little help blowing off some steam."

Closing his eyes, Bill forces himself to ask, "And wuh-what does t-that have to do w-with muh-me?"

"You're Fred and mines favorite punching bag." Elliot replied all too cheerfully. "Especially since I know you had something to do with what happened to Fred."

Flaubergasted, Bill stares at the teen, "Wuh-what are you tuh-talking about? I-I didn't d-do a-anything!"

"Oh really? So you're going to tell me that you have nothing to do with the fact that a glass jar felled on my best friend's head; a glass jar that broke on top of him and not only did he not have glass imbedded in his head but also gave him a concussion?"

"H-how is t-that my fuh-fault?"

"You're a freak Denbrough; weird shit happens when you're around."

"T-that doesn't muh-mean that it wuh-was my fuh-fault!"

Elliot rolls his eyes, "Fine, fine stop your bitching." And then he looks at him, eying him and down. Bill fidgets under the scrutiny, suddenly feeling naked.

And then those beady eyes stop at his right hand, specifically his ring.

"That's a nice looking ring you got there Denbrough. It's bit creepy looking but nice."

Tugging his wrist lightly, Bill forces a quiet, "T-thank you."

"You know... I can let you go," he stops dramatically as he looks at

him and then looks at his ring. Bill already knew what he was going to say, "If you give me the ring."

"No."

Elliot raises an eyebrow, frowning, "What do you mean no?"

Swallowing, Bill continues, "I cuh-can't give y-you the ruh-ring."

"And why the fuck not?"

Because it's mine, Bill wanted to say but instead, he replies, "Buh-because I cuh-can't tuh-take it off."

"What?"

"I-it wuh-won't come o-off." He wiggles his ring finger, "I can s-s-show you."

"I don't trust you, you little shit. I'll take it off myself." Elliot sneers as he holds on to Bill's wrist tightly before using his other hand to take off the ring from the captured wrist.

Just as Bill already knew, it didn't come off.

Elliot let out a surprised grunt but tried to take it off again. But the ring wouldn't budge.

Bill purses his lips together as the other teen continue to tug at his ring, starting to feel pain at the insistent pulling, feeling as though his finger was about to come off instead of the ring. After silently enduring the pulling of his thin limb, Bill let out a sigh of relief when the other male stopped pulling.

"What the fuck Denbrough, did you super glued the damn thing on your finger?"

Bill ignored him, wanting to snatch his hand back and get away from this asshole.

"Well since, we can't take it off the easy way. Why don't I take it off the fun way?"

Alarm bells rang in Bill's head.

"The fuh-fuh-fun w-way?"

Elliot didn't answer, only tightens his hold on Bill's wrist and dragged him towards several trash cans, slamming his wrist on top of one of the trash can lids. Bill releases a pained grunt at the action, his body leaning slightly forward due to the way his wrist was pinned down. Elliot smiles down at him but the smile was disconcerting, looking completely terrifying now that there were in a corner of a darkened area where not even the last bit of the sun's ray couldn't brighten the area.

"Well, not fun for you," He brandishes his knife, much to Bill's horror,
"But fun for me."

He was going to get his ring by cutting off his finger. **He was going to cut off his finger!**

"No wait, please!" Bill cries out, trying to yank his hand away.

"Well, would you look at that, I knocked off the stutter right out of you." Elliot taunts as he brings the knife closer.

"Puh-please s-s-s-stop; you cuh-can't do this!"

"Keep begging boy. I like it when they beg."

No matter how hard he was tugging, his wrist was still caught in a tight hold and he could only stare with fear as he saw the mad glint in the other teen's eyes. Not wanting to see what was going to happen next, Bill closes his eyes.

Heart pounding in his ears, Bill almost didn't hear the surprised gasp until he heard Elliot scream. Snapping his eyes open, Bill looks up to see what was going on.

Looking at the scene with slack jaw, Bill watch as Elliot was slowly but surely being dragged sideways; into the wall of the building beside them!

The teen tried to put up a fight, Bill could see that, but he was still

being pulled closer to the darken wall; not even the faded, red bricks of the wall could be seen. And as Bill looks closely, he could see something...black pulling on to the dark haired male's arm, almost looking like an incorporeal, shadowy hand...

Elliot, who had half of his body surrounded by the utter blackness of the wall of the building, tried to claw his way out with one hand, attempting to push himself away only for him to be dragged quicker, screaming the whole time as his nail cracked and break, making an awful sound as he was pulled completely inside the impenetrable darkness.

Just as sudden as the darkness appeared so did it quickly vanished, now leaving behind a dim red wall that was still somewhat hidden in the shadows.

Shocked and out of breath, Bill can only stare dumbly at the wall where his classmate disappeared to, bringing his hurt wrist to his chest, already knowing that he had finger shaped bruises on it.

Hearing a noise behind him, Bill panics and turns around sharply. Only for his eyes to widen when his red shopping cart rolls out leisurely next to him... from the same wall that Elliot disappeared to.

Disturbed, tired, and confused, Bill runs a hand through his hair, tugging at his bang roughly.

What the *fuck* just happened?!

4. Birdhouse in Your Soul

Oh God, this chapter was exhausting to write. I'm satisfied with the way it came out but this still exhausted me. ^; Anyway, I hope you guys are as satisfied as I am with this chapter. :3

Warnings: Blood and Gore, Physical Violence, Explicit Language, Hints of Inappropriate Thoughts of a Minor, Actual Inappropriate Thoughts of a Minor, Cannibalism (although can it actually consider cannibalism if the person isn't human?), and Removal of Body Parts.

If I'm missing any other warning(s), please tell me.

Disclaimer: I don't own Bill, Richie, or IT. I do own the jackass Elliot though.

The Lonely Angel and his Guardian Monster

Chapter 4: Birdhouse in Your Soul

Bill closes the door behind him in a detached manner, his mind not fully focused on the present as he keeps repeating the scene that happened just 15 minutes ago. In all honesty, it was a miracle he even got home with how out of it he was; he knew he was walking home, he knew his way home without even thinking about it. And yet he felt far away, like he was taking a backseat and someone else was controlling his body.

Goosebumps appear on his skin and he pushes himself away from the door, not even realizing that he was leaning against it in the first place. Pulling the cart after him Bill goes to the kitchen, untying the bags from the cart and placing them on the floor. Putting the cart aside Bill then starts to put away the groceries.

When he put everything away, he eyes the two cereal boxes that he left on the kitchen table. His stomach growled in hunger and yet he felt nauseated at the thought of eating. Sighing tiredly, Bill puts the boxes away and instead decides to grab an apple instead. Washing it, Bill bounded up the stairs, not interested in staying downstairs and

he was already done with washing his clothes, so he had no reason to stay.

Tiptoeing down the hallway, he quietly opens the door and enters quickly, closing the door with no sound due to years of practice. As he walks to bed he curses.

He forgot to replace the light bulb in his lamp. He'll do it when he was done with his apple.

Eating serenely, his mind wanders once again to the scene in the alley.

What happened to Elliot? Did he really just disappear into a brick wall? Was he even alive? And how the hell did his red cart appeared behind him?

Bill glares at his ring.

"Y-you had s-s-something to do wuh-with this d-didn't you?" he asks loudly as he raises his hand up to look at his ring closely.

He receives no response, of course he wouldn't it. But he raises an eyebrow when his ring heat up after a few seconds after he asked the question.

"I'm nuh-not s-sure if that's a y-yes or no."

This time, the ring did nothing.

Snorting, Bill goes back to his apple, eating it leisurely until he only left the core. Leaving his bed, he leaves his room to throw it away on the bathroom trashcan and wash his hands. Drying his hands, he padded quietly down the hall and heading down the stairs. After doing a quick check and still seeing nothing, he heads down the basement.

Staring at the brown and worn out shelf, he looks around before smiling when he sees what he was looking for. Grabbing the box, he looks inside, grinning when he sees the last light bulb inside the box. Holding it securely in his hands, he heads up the stairs, closing the basement door behind him and continue his trek up to the second

floor.

The moment he was inside his room, he swiftly changed the burned out light bulb and replaced with the new one, hoping that this time it would last longer. Giving the string a light tug, the room was illuminated with the extra light. Satisfied, he leaves it on but decided to turn off the main light in his room, the room now giving a soft, comforting glow instead.

Feeling tired and yet restless, Bill decides to simply head towards his drawer, grab a pair of clean pajamas and head towards the bathroom to take a quick shower. Maybe taking a nice, relaxing shower would help him loosen up...

Stepping inside his room, Bill stretches, letting out a pleased sigh when his back popped. It seems that the shower did its trick; he was loose limbed and ready to go to sleep, unable to stop yawning since he got out of the shower as he pads towards his bed. Pulling the covers back he climbs into the bed, grateful that for once his mind wasn't racing, as his hands ruffled the pillow before turning off the lamp.

As he lays down, he cuddles up to his blanket, closing his eyes as he lets the silence and the tiredness in his body lead him to hopefully a quick sleep.

In less than ten minutes, he was fast asleep.

Something woke Bill up.

Shaking slightly, Bill looks into the darkness, wondering what exactly rouse him from his sleep. Feeling uneasy, Bill sits up on the bed and blindly searched for the lamp until he could feel the bottom half of it. Sliding his hand upward, he found the string and tugged it, letting the room light up in its soft glow.

Blinking slowly, he looks around his room. Seeing nothing out of the ordinary, Bill wonders what woke him up until he noticed something. On top of his desk were two pictures frame; one of him and his

Grandma Willow and the other one with him and Georgie, a few months before he was murdered.

He hid those pictures, not wanting either of his parents to rip them away from him or in his dad's case, tear them into pieces out of anger and anguish.

So they shouldn't be on his desk at all.

Bill looks at the pictures with bewilderment before he catches on.

He was in a dream. But if he's in a dream...then where's the other boy?

Cautiously, Bill slips out of his bed, standing next to the bed as he looks around. Due to the lamp, the room wasn't very bright, corners of his room still having rather suspicious shadows. Swallowing his nerves, Bill walks briskly towards his bedroom door, wanting to reach the light switch and turn on the lights. He got to his door when

"You know, I kind of would appreciate if you don't turn on that light."

Jumping out of his skin, Bill turns to the sound of the voice, eyes narrowed and ready to retort when a gasp escaped his lips instead. The other boy was standing next to his bed, looking seemingly calm. But what disturbed Bill was how the boy looked.

The noirette was abnormally pale and his entire body looked almost transparent, ghostly like. The only thing that stood out of the disturbingly and nearly invisible body was his black curls, that looked almost limp and his brown eyes that looked practically dead with black bags on his lower eyelids. They were also bloodshot; as though he hasn't gotten any sleep.

The boy smiles at Bill, his smile thin and tired.

"Wuh-wuh-what huh-happened to you!?"

The smile curl up wider into a genuine grin, "Aww, worried about me pretty boy?"

Without even thinking, Bill was right in front of the other male, hands reaching out to touch him when he stops himself. Outstretched hand trembling, a little he pulls it back, looking back at the teen. He couldn't help but notice with bemusement that the other male was shorter than him; the boy only reaches up to his chin.

"Why d-do you luh-look like tuh-that?" he asks, ignoring the raven haired boy's question.

"Oh how kind of you Bill, not everyone can be as good looking as you." the other boy quips drily.

Bill glares at him, "Y-you know wuh-what I mean, duh-don't change the s-s-subject!"

The noirette stares at him oddly, both eyebrows raise up to his hairlines and an intense focus in those inscrutable eyes, still smiling but the expression he had on his face made the smile look off. Bill hunches his shoulders, nervously biting his bottom lip and wondering whether or not he overstepped an unknown boundary.

But then the boy's features soften and the weird smile dropped, his expression looking haggard and his shoulders dropped.

"It's nothing serious. This is just the consequences of my actions when I tried to force myself to do more than I can."

Bill felt his stomach drop, eyes wide as he stares at the other male.

Horrified, Bill whispers, "Y-you're luh-like this be-be-because of me?"

Of course he looks like this because of him, it always because of him. Why does he keep bringing harm to others?

The doe eyed boy snaps his gaze at him, his face twisting into a scowl, "**No!**" he snips forcibly, that simple word growled out than spoken; the snarl sounding far too animalistic to come from a human throat.

Bill unconsciously steps back.

The small teen sighs, "Would you stop looking at me like that? I'm

not going to hurt you."

Bill eyes him nervously but took a step forward, "I'm sorry."

"This is not your fault nor am I blaming you. I'm just mad that I'm still weak."

"Y-you're not in p-pain are you?"

The brown eyed teen shakes his head, "No. I'm just tired."

"Here," Bill, without thinking, grabs on to his wrist. Hearing the sharp intake of breath made Bill look to his side and see that the noirette was staring at his hand. Flustered and nervous, he let's go of the wrist. "I'm s-s-sorry!"

"No! Look, I'm not upset. I'm just surprised that you grabbed me...and it's been a while since I someone has actually touched me." He added the last part quietly, staring at his hand as though he looking at a foreign object.

"H-how long is a wuh-while?"

The teen's smile was sorrowful but had a touch of something that put him on edge, "A very *long* time."

Bill looks at him warily but then sighs quietly, "Cuh-come here; why duh-don't you s-s-sit on my b-bed? Y-you really do luh-look tired."

"Oh my Bill~ If y'all done wanted ta get frisky with me y'all should done had done said so!" the other teen purrs, his voice doing a bad impersonation of the Southern twang. Despite the bad mimicry of South American accent, Bill blushes in embarrassment.

"Nuh-no! I wuh-wuh-wouldn't—"

The small teen laughs, "Relax Bill, I know you wouldn't." the noirette reassures as he takes a seat at the edge of the bed.

Bill couldn't help but pout, cheeks still flush as he sits a few inches away from his pillow.

"Now your face is matching your hair Big Bill." The boy teases.

Bill glowers, annoyed that the blush on his face refuses to leave before blinking in confusion, "B-big Bill?"

"Well, you're name is Bill and you're pretty tall—which that shit isn't fair, excuse you!—and it fits perfectly with your name. So why not?"

Bill hums, playing with a loose string from his shirt, "You k-know wuh-what's not fuh-fair?"

"That I have a better haircut than you?"

Bill felt his lips twitch, "Y-you s-seem to know so muh-much about me and y-yet I huh-hardly know a-anything about y-y-you."

The other teen smiles weakly, the glow of the lamp making his somewhat ghostly appearance look a sickly yellow complexion or like the kid had stepped into an old, sepia photograph.

Biting his bottom lip, Bill stares at his hands, nervousness and curiosity warring inside him before narrowing his eyes. Inhaling, he raises his head to look at the other teen, bravely looking at him in the eyes.

"W-who are y-you? What's your name?"

When he uttered that question, there was a sudden hush.

The boy, if possible, went a shade paler; eyes open wide and the pupils almost swallowing the irises, the redness in those tired eyes giving it a manic look as he continues to stare at him. No, not staring at him. He was looking through him, beyond him. It made him feel afraid and inadequate at the same time.

He felt like he was back in his parents' room, looking at his mother's dull eyes as she stared right through him; unimportant, not worth a second glance.

But he was so afraid as well; did he upset him? Did he make him snap out at whatever façade he had before and was now going to treat him differently? (Like his parents did after he broke them

beyond repair?)

"Richard."

And then Bill could breathe again, "Wuh-what?"

"My name is Richard; Richard Tozier."

"Ruh-Richard?" he tested the name out, unconsciously scrunching his nose.

"You don't like my name Big Bill?" the noirette teases.

Bill shakes his head rapidly, "It's nuh-not that! It's just—the name s-sounds s-serious for s-s-someone like you."

The kid shrugs, "Whelp, that's what my parents named me."

Pursing his lips, Bill hesitates before smiling anxiously, "C-can I call you Richie?"

Surprised, the other male stares at him, "Say what?"

"It w-was only a s-s-suggestion! If you duh-don't wuh-want me to call you that—"

"Richie..." the noirette repeats the name lowly before a smile spread across his face, a smile that was tinged with sadness, "Sure Bill, I would love to be called Richie. After all...I don't think the name Richard belongs to me anymore."

Bill eyes the boy sadly. Richie had that pained, faraway look in his eyes and he wanted so badly to reach out and lay a hand either on his shoulder or on his hand like his grandma used to do. But he didn't know Richie that well; he didn't know what was okay with him or what boundaries did he had. So the only thing he could offer was sympathetic smile.

Unable to stop staring at the boy in front of him, Bill try to take in all the details of the teen, finally having the actual time to observe him now that he wasn't being forced to wake up. As he continues to stare, he raises an eyebrow in confusion, head tilting as he focuses on

something in particular.

"A penny for your thoughts Big Bill or do you just want to undress me with your eyes?"

Ignoring the question—and the way his face reddened—Bill simply asks, "Richie, a-a-are you Amish?"

In response to his blunt question, Richie raised an eyebrow at him, lips a bit pursed before he blurts, "What the fuck is an Amish?!"

"It's—nuh-nevermind. Richie, wuh-why are y-your clothes—"

"Hideous. Unflattering. And outdated as fuck?"

"I...w-was not guh-going to s-say that."

Richie smirks, "But you were thinking about it though."

Bill rolls his eyes, not bothering to answer. But he did have to admit, he did think that Richie's clothes were rather odd. The clothes that he was wearing had an old look to them; like they belonged in a different time such as the late Middle Ages and not only that but they appear to be too big on him.

Richie was wearing a white, long sleeved shirt that had 'v' collar that exposed his throat, neck, and collarbone—due to how big it looked on him—and a pair of black pants that he believed were breeches. The breeches seem to have been folded multiple times, exposing his black leather, low heeled shoes with a single big buckle in the middle.

Either they were hand-me-downs or Richie was playing dress up; although he doesn't think it was the latter...

"Before you ask, they're not mine. I'm simply borrowing it."

"B-b-borrowing it?"

"Yeah, the... *kind* sir that gave it to me didn't need it anymore." Richie replies with smile that bared his teeth in a manner that looked everything but friendly. And for a moment, Bill could have sworn

that his eyes flashed black.

But this is a dream; he must be imagining things...

Suddenly Richie straightens eyes unfocused and head tilted a bit, as if listening to something, something that he couldn't see.

"Sorry Bill, I have to cut this conversation short."

Bill was surprise to feel disappointed at the remark.

"Do you ruh-really have to?"

"Yeah, sorry about that but there's something I have to do." his smile was a mixture of affable yet apologetic.

Bill didn't know how to feel about this situation. While now he was on speaking term with this...kid who can only appear in his dream, who apparently comes from the ring or at least that's what he estimates, and who he knows nothing about. But for once, it felt nice to talk to someone; someone that was his age and someone who didn't turn their nose at him or belittle him with words that hurt and do more damage than a punch or a kick could do.

"Hey, stop making that sad face."

Bill didn't even notice that he had that expression on his face.

"You're acting like this is the last time you're going to see; that's not happening pretty boy. I'm going to be seeing you soon, either later or when you go to sleep the next night."

"O-okay," Bill answers hesitantly and awkwardly, "I guh-guess I'll be s-s-seeing you s-soon?"

"You bet your ass you will! Now if you excuse me, I have work to do and I think you're going to be waking up soon for your bathroom break." Richie quips as he points to the bedside table, specifically his clock. When Bill turns to look at it, it stated 4:15 AM.

"Buh-but this is a d-d-dream, there's no way that cuh-could be puh-possible." Bill says as he turns back to face Richie only to gape in

shock when he sees that the other boy was gone.

Before he could think about it too much, an odd sensation on the back of his head made him close his eyes. When he opened them again, his room was dark.

This time, he was sure that he was awake. When he turns to the side and looks at his clock, he sees that it was the same time as the one in his dream. He glares at the clock with incredulity before sitting up wearily on the bed. He was too damn tired to be putting too much thought on this weird and possibly supernatural bullshit...

Elliot opens his eyes slowly, groggy and confused as he looks around, raising himself by his elbows.

Black; everything was pitch black.

Sitting up completely, Elliot tried to keep his calm as he attempted to look around in the darkness. But he was wasting his time; it was so dark, he couldn't even see his hands! Standing warily he moved his hands out, trying to see he could touch a wall, a door, or even a light switch. Feeling nothing, he gingerly walks forward and continue trying to feel his way around the area.

"This is cool object you got here."

He jumps, not expecting that. The voice was young and perky and seems to resound from everywhere. He didn't know which way to turn.

"Who's there!" he cries out, frustrated at his lack of sight.

A small flicker of light came from his right and he quickly turns towards it. When he turned, the light was gone. Growling, he was going to walk towards that same direction when he saw the weak light appear again.

It was a lighter. His lighter and a kid was using it!

"Hey, give me that back you little shit!"

"Do you kiss your mother with that mouth? Although I would kiss yours, she's a fair-head lady that's for sure even if she is a little uptight."

"I don't give a fuck what you want to do or how you know my mother. Just give me my lighter back!"

"Oh, so that's what it's called." The boy hums before the flame dies away.

"Hey!" he runs towards the direction the kid was and tried to feel him through the darkness. But his hands touched nothing.

"Didn't your parents teach you manners? If you want something, you have to ask nicely."

Now the voice sounded from behind him. He turns around quickly to see the little brat using his lighter to light up a candle inside a lantern. The area that he was in was finally illuminated but the glow wasn't strong enough and the area still remained unseen. It was as if he was surrounded by nothingness.

The boy in front of him was small with wide, brown eyes that looked tired and red and he had messy black curls. The flame of the thick candle inside the lantern made his freckles stand out. But the odd thing about him was that he looked transparent; like those ghost you see in horror movies.

"You know," the kid starts, eyes staring right at him, "You guys are pretty lucky. You all got your light bulbs and your fancy ass flashlights. We on the other hand had to use candles and most of the time, that wasn't enough to chase away the monsters that hid in the dark corners of our rooms."

Elliot snorts, "Thank you for sharing unnecessary information but this is the last time. Give...me...back...my...lighter!"

"You want it? Then come and get it." The teen teases as he stretches out his hand and opens his hand to show him the lighter with the black case that had silver flames.

Elliot glares at him, "Why don't you give it to me?"

"Huh, you're not as stupid as you look."

"You know what? Fuck this, I'm out!" he hisses as he starts to walk to a different direction. But when he walked the first few steps, something grabbed on to his ankle. Frustrated, he tried to kick away the thing that was holding his ankle only to have his other ankle grabbed. Nervously, he bends down to slap at whatever had him in a tight grip.

But unexpectedly, he was grabbed by the throat and the sudden action made him let out a choked gasp. He grabs on to whatever it's holding him but when he laid his hands on it, he couldn't encircle his hands around it; it was as if whatever was holding him had no solid form.

Then he was being pushed back but instead of stopping until he was standing, he was still being pushed back until he felt that uncomfortable pain in the middle of his back, that little warning when you're pushing your flexibility too quickly. Internally, Elliot was panicking.

"Do you want to see how far can you go?"

Hearing the voice near him, Elliot tries to look for him until he saw an orange yellow glow at the corner of his left eyes. Turning his head, he sees kid standing next to, holding up the lantern near his face. The boy was smiling; his eyes big and earnest but the redness in his eyes made him look a touch insane. Maybe he was?

He tried to speak, his voice tight as around the grip on his throat, "How—what?"

"What's holding you? Is that what's you're asking? Well I'm glad you asked my fine Cox-Comb~ What's holding you tight and making sure you don't walk away, especially when someone is having a conversation with you—seriously, doesn't your mother teach you manners?—are my shadows!" the dark haired teen replies perkily.

Staring at him with disbelief, he could only let out a high pitched, "What?"

"Well, maybe I should explain better. They're not mine, well my shadow is mine can't lie about that, but the other shadows I can control them? No wait, hmm, okay I have full control and can manipulate the darkness and the shadows? Yeah, I think that one is better."

"You're—you're fucking nuts you little freak!" Elliot snaps in a disturbed tone.

Suddenly the grip on his ankles was gone and he was slammed down, his head and the base of his spine smacking loudly against the floor, the wind getting knocked out of him, all the while the hold on his throat never loosening. As he tries to blink through the pain, he hears footsteps next to his head. When he looks, he unconsciously flinches when he sees that the boy's unassuming eyes were narrowed into an icy glare.

"You shouldn't aim that stone at me when you, my kind sir, were having a sexual dream about a boy that is three years younger than you. And apparently it's not the first time either." The kid snarls dangerously, his lips curled up in disgust.

Elliot felt the grip on his throat vanish but before he could rejoice his freedom, his wrists were grabbed and pinned down on the side of his head, once again leaving him vulnerable.

"Now, as I was saying before I was rudely interrupted by your whining, little bitch ass, I'm able to manipulate and control the dark, the shadows included. You ask why? Well... I guess I have to thank my grandparents for that or mainly my grandma since she's the one brave enough to make a deal with the Devil." He says the last part offhandedly; hand on his chin and his head tilted to the side.

"Now I definitely know you're crazy—no, scratch that, you're batshit insane!"

"Says the one who's being pinned down with something that is not my hands," The boy says drily, "Anyway, I'm Richard Tozier and you must be Elliot McFugly; how unpleasant to meet you."

"The fuck are you doing now?"

"I'm introducing myself? Damn Harold, I know you're as intelligent as a half-brain dead carrier pigeon but you need to get with the fucking program! Just because you have the manners of a cavemen doesn't mean I have forgotten mines."

"Fuck you!"

"No thank you. I'm not into pigs."

Elliot breathed through his teeth, "Okay you little shit, why are you doing this? I don't even know you."

"True, you don't know me and I don't want to get to know you but we both know the same person." Richard drawls.

"What the hell are you talking about?"

"Oh come you little churl, use your brain; you have a small list of victims that you love to harass."

Elliot knitted his eyebrows as he tries to think who this kid is talking about. An image of big and scared blue eyes popped into his head along with the image of them biting on their bottom lip.

"Denbrough?"

"Bingo." Richard quips in a cheerful tone.

"You're here because of that little shit? Why do you care about that anorexic little bitch?"

The smile on Richard's face dropped to replace a neutral expression. He looks at him calmly, too calmly as he places the lantern beside his feet, which was near his head, and he slowly walks a bit down until he reaches his legs, which were free at the moment.

Elliot jumps when he feel small hands grab on to his left ankle and raise his leg up. He tries to kick him away with his other leg only for it to be grabbed by the same thing that was holding down his wrist.

Then he let out pained shriek when the kid twisted his ankle without warning. He could distinctively hear a light crack as his bone

snapped, his stomach rolling at the gut-wrenching pain as nausea build up in his esophagus. Roughly swallowing, he tries to breathe in through his nose, his body quivering as pain raced up and down his leg, focusing mainly on his ankle.

After a moment of silence, not counting his harsh and loud breathing, he hears the teen speak.

"I would suggest you keep your little comments to yourself." Richard says blandly, as if he were discussing the weather as he uncaringly let the fractured ankle drop. Elliot bit back a curse as pain shoot up quickly through his body.

Richard then walks up until he reaches his head and lean down, his face a few inches away from his, "Besides, that "anorexic little bitch" as you like to call him is the star of your perverse dreams." he growls as he glowers at him with an overwhelming fury that Elliot felt cowed and pinned under the intense gaze. He wonders if this how ants feel when they're under a magnifying glass of a curious yet malicious kid.

"H-h-how do you know that?"

The boy ignores him, "You're not worthy enough to lick his worn shoes, what makes you think that you deserved to be sucked off from my master?"

Despite the pain and the slight fear, Elliot raises an eyebrow, "Master?"

"He found me, he freed me, and now I'm in his debt," Richard says nonchalantly, "In a way, he's my master and I'm his... pet I guess?"

Without his permission, he begun to image two pale bodies writhing against each other; one tall and slim, almost fragile looking, holding on to a black leather leash while the other was smaller but curvier with a black leather choker that had a "D" shaped ring in front of it, the leash attached to the ring...

A sudden punch to the ribs snapped him out of it; once again knocking the wind out of him and making him cringe in pain.

"Not like that you perverted prick!"

Elliot stares at him with surprised look. What's next? That he could read minds?!

Richard snorts, "Stop making that face. I don't need to read your mind to know what exactly you're thinking about creep." Then he straightens, "Now, you're going to be a good boy and lay there while I check something."

Elliot snarls, "Go to hell you little freak!"

The kid had the audacity to rolls his eyes, "Been there, done that, got a personal invitation asshole. Not the most agreeable space but you can't exactly tell the Devil to fuck off. Although," then the little freak smiles widely, a smile entirely unpleasant that bared his sharp canines as he gets near to one of his bound hands, "From what I can see, the polite gentleman Lucifer is dying to *meet you~*"

Elliot stares at with a troubled expression, flinching when the boy grabs on to one of his arm and yank it towards him. He tried to rip it away from those small hands but the kid had a surprisingly strong grip, uncaringly digging his fingers to his skin.

He watches with intense focus as the nail of the boy's pointer finger grew until it become long and it curved enough to become a claw. Then he was forced to watch as he brought down the pointer finger and made a single, clean cut on his arm, blood rushing into the surface. As blood ran down his arms, he sees Richard leans down. But instead of licking like he thought he would, he sniffed it?

He sees him taking in a deep whiff, eyes close and his nose flaring. He sits still and silent and then he takes another sniff. This time there was a reaction. Richard shivers, baring his teeth in a smile. When he opens his eyes, his eyes were pure black before it was gone in a blink of an eye. Panic starts to set in.

"Hmm, I'm surprised. For a human that eats a lot of unhealthy food and likes to smoke a lot, you're pretty healthy. Clean. Your blood sugar is a bit high but that's fine, it won't affect me."

"Why are you interested in my body?" he asks lowly, body tense as he looks at the small teen.

"This is what you're going to do," Richard starts, not giving any mind to the previous question, "You're going to help me regain my strength and help me recover my powers." he says idly as he walks again to where his legs were. Elliot wanted to pull his broken ankle close to his body.

"Why should I?" he retorts, trying to keep the apprehension in his voice. He gasps when Richard grabs his leg...his uninjured leg.

"Well you see," then the teen grins, lips pulled back to reveal pointed teeth that protruded in all directions; teeth that he has seen in pictures of the sand tiger sharks in his Shark Encyclopedia book. "You have no choice."

Then Richard places his foot on his right hip and without any hesitation his digs his claws—when did they become claws!—and yanks. He couldn't hold back his scream; his fingers digging into his palms, not caring about the blood and the pain in his palm as he can feel the muscles and tendons being pulled and pulled until something gave away. He could vaguely hear a crack as his bone also snap and then something warm running down his crotch, hips, and the floor beneath him.

Pain, all he could feel was pain, pain so strong that made him feel nauseated and lightheaded all at the same time, tears along with sweat running down the side of his face, inhaling and exhaling quickly but he still couldn't get enough air—

"Uh-oh, you're bleeding too fast. Can't have that." Then he feels a hand on the area that hurts the most. Weakly, Elliot raises himself and looks down. And he wished that he didn't.

Even with his tear filled vision he can still see that his right leg was missing. No not missing, it was ripped from his body and all that was left was uneven, messy stump of pink and red meat that refused to stop bleeding. Elliot could only stare with gaped horror.

But then he sees the hand, a hand that was dirtied with blood, as he

sees something black surround the hand and then transfer to his leg stump, the inky black mist still connected to the hand. And then he sees with his own two eyes that the stump stops bleeding and the black mist disappear from the boy's hand.

"There, can't have you dying, not yet at least." Richard says with a smirk, the glow from the lantern making his protruding sharp teeth and the now solid black eyes look terrifying. Then Richard looks down which made him look down as well. He really should stop torturing himself.

In the teen's hand was his severed leg, the jean leg completely filthy with blood and specks of flesh. He sees the kid grab the pant leg and simply tear it away from the detached limb, as though he was tearing off a decorative paper wrap before he brings the leg up to his face. He opens his maw, displaying those horrendous teeth as he brings them down to took take a huge chunk of flesh from the severed leg.

Nausea rose up in his gullet and no longer able to hold it in, he turns his head to side and emptied himself, coughing at the tastes of vile in his mouth, trying to ignore the sound of the dark haired teen chewing in the background.

Minutes pass, him writhing in pain and Richard eating when he hears a pleased sigh from the kid. He hears a loud gulp and then something being thrown aside. He refuses to see what the state of his limb have become.

"Not the best tasting meat I ever had but beggars can't be choicer can they? Either way, that hit the spot." Richard comments idly.

Elliot hears movements and when he turns his head to see, he sees the teen stretching, his face messily wiped. The noirette's body started to look a bit solid and the black bags underneath his eyes were gone. When he looks closely, the eyes no longer look bloodshot.

"Why? Why did you do this?" he asks hoarsely, his throat aching and his mouth dry.

The boy tilts his head, eyes now a normal, earthy brown as he stares at him with intense focus. It made him look down.

"The moment you put your hands, no, the moment you set your attention on Bill was when you dug yourself a grave."

Then Richard walks forward, ignoring the way he tries to push himself away as he stand next to his head before crouching. He jumps and quivers when the raven haired teen grabs him by his cheeks. While his nails were no longer claws, they were still sharp enough to cut through his skin like butter. They rested teasingly—threatening—on the skin of his cheeks.

"The moment you set your eyes on him, the moment you opened your big mouth and started spewing shit at him, the moment you had the nerve to *touch* him, *hurt* him and still believe yourself worthy to think, to dream of seeing him in such a vulnerable and trustworthy position? That was when you **fucked** up!" by the last sentence the brown in his eyes disappeared, only to be replace by the solid nightmarish black, his lips pulled back to show elongated fangs as he growls out those words; feeling the pinprick sensation on his cheeks when the nails dig into his skin.

Elliot wanted the earth to swallow him up. Tears once again ran down his cheeks.

"Now you're going to stay here and become my food source since it is your fault that I became so weak." Richard quips in faux cheerful tone, seemingly enjoying his tears, before letting go of his cheeks and he straightens up.

Elliot then feels the restraints on his wrists vanish. He didn't dare move a muscle though, not only because of the pain that was still going strong and had now spread to his whole body but the most obvious was that he was missing one leg and he had a broken ankle on his remaining leg. But still—

"I'll scream." Elliot warns, trying to sound brave and tough but the tears and the pain in his voice made his bravery sound inadequate.

Richard snorts as he grabs the lantern from the floor. Due to the lantern being near him Elliot felt a sudden chill spread all over his body when the source of his heat was taken away.

"Go ahead. Wreck your throat crying for help. No one will hear." The boy then smirks, "After all, you're inside my dimensional storage."

Elliot felt his stomach plummet inside his stomach, "What?"

"Elli, Elli, Elli, were you not listening to me? Oh right, you called me a batshit insane freak. Heh, proved you wrong didn't I? Anyway since you seem to have forgotten, I **manipulate** the darkness; which includes the shadows and such. And some of the powers come in handy; I can travel through the dark or shadows—depending really since this shit is tricky—and make my own storage. Intriguing isn't it?"

"You—what are you?!"

The noirette had a faraway look in his eyes, his eyes flashing black for a brief moment then he shrugs, "I don't even know myself. Oh well, *arrivederci* Elliot~" he waves happily before he brings the lantern up to his face, opens the case, and blows away the flame of the dwindling candle, shrouding the area in total darkness. Just like in the beginning.

Surrounded by total blackness, by complete silence that felt so unnatural, with only the sounds of his breathing and the rapid beating of his heart keeping him company made the hair on the back of his neck stand up.

Feeling pain, weak, and even though his eyesight was working just fine, the darkness around him made him feel so *blind*, he felt like he was losing his mind! Everywhere he turned it was dark, dark, *dark!*

Trying to keep his breathing even, he closes his eyes, wanting to disappear for just one moment inside his mind, make himself forget about everything that had just happen just a few minutes ago, and pretend he was back at home, back in his room and arguing with his mother or harassing his weak willed ex-girlfriend.

But then he feels his leg twitching and a sharp pain running up and down the limb and in frustration, he goes to pat it down or at least try to sooth the pain only to pause when his hand met uneven flesh and as he got down, air. Snapping his eyes open, he snatches his

hand away, wiping it almost roughly on his shirt when he felt lukewarm fluid on his fingers.

He still felt his "leg" twitching and throbbing, his lower body tacky with dried blood.

How could he forget about his leg? How could he forget that he was no longer attached to his right leg! And that now he can never go back home because he was stuck here?!

In the dark...

All alone and wounded.

In the dark!

Bringing his hands towards his face, the stench of blood filling his nose, he claws at his face as he whimpers.

"No one will hear..."

All alone.

He screams!

Bill groans and stretches as he begins to wake up, opening his eyes wearily as he glares at his clock. It's not really that bad to wake up at 10 o'clock AM at a Sunday but damn it he wanted to continue sleeping!

Grumbling he sits up on his bed, rubbing his eyes with his knuckles as he swing his leg over the bed. After stretching his upper body, he goes to stand up when he stops, eyebrows knitted together in confusion as his sleep fogged mind tried to comprehend what he was seeing. After blinking a few times, he registers that no, it wasn't his imagination.

What was his grandma Willow's old candle lantern doing in his room?

Picking it up gently, he stares at it. Did his grandma use it one last

time before she died? It's been so long he has forgotten whether or not his grandma had used it.

Deciding not to pay too much attention to it, Bill simply opens the lantern and takes out the used candle, deciding to replace it with a new one when he's fully awake. Nodding to himself, Bill stands up from his bed and place it a corner where neither of his parents can see it, keeping the knowledge of the candle lantern to himself. He doesn't mean to be but he's slightly possessive over his grandma's few remaining knick knacks.

Once satisfied with the hiding spot, Bill smiles groggily before walking off, getting ready to start a whole new day.

I'm sorry if anything that I wrote during the gore scenes parts were wrongs. I googled it but you can't always trust Google. U_U;